WILD MUSTARD

WILLIAM JASPER NICOLLS

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BY

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"MOST SUBJECT
IS THE FATTEST SOIL
TO WEEDS—"

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I
A POSTAL CARD

THE R. F. D. Route No. 3 was responsible for the delivery of the Postal Card that Anne held in her plump sun-kissed hand.

" How funny," she finally commented, after reading, and turning the little official card over and over again. " How funny, don't you think so, daddy? "

Daddy was smoking comfortably in his favorite corner of the low-ceilinged porch, drawing in white feathery whiffs from his straight-stemmed English pipe—everything was straight about Daddy Forest, from his straight aristocratic looking nose, down to his long, thin, straight legs; his dealings with his neighboring farmers were straight; and so was his religion and his morals. Daddy was

smoking comfortably, and the curling little wreaths of smoke floated out over the most delectable bit of farm land in that most delightful valley called Chester, in Pennsylvania.

A big elder tree, that leaned conformably and protectingly over the end of the porch, shaded Daddy Forest from the ardent rays of a May noon-day sun. Robins were hopping around over the smooth piece of grass in front of the house, a trifling bit of green that Anne always called "The Campus," for Anne had been to school; in fact, she had graduated, with all its accompanying frill of white dress and pink ribbons, from a not very distant seminary. So that Anne was constantly correcting her daddy, a daddy whose head was so full of knowledge, experience, and reading, that it hung down like a head of wheat; full of good, hard grain.

Besides the robins, who had long ago lost all fear of Bob, the big, fat, lazy yellow and white cat, there piped away in perfect security,

in the top branches of a great oak tree, a pair of red-winged black birds. Anne said they were scarlet tanagers, but daddy called them black birds; and beyond the oak, the bright green of the young wheat put the "Campus" to shame; it was so soft, so lush and velvety. And the lilac bushes in full fragrant pink and white bloom. And the orchard full of apple blossoms, with a carpet of pale blue violets under the trees. And the white cherry blossoms; the dogwood trees in the woods across the purling, chattering creek; the daffodils, little dabs of yellow on the hillside, and dandelions; the stately birch trees, just bursting into masses of quivering tender leaves. Oh, it was wonderful!

Daddy pulled long whiffs through his straight-stemmed pipe, and looked at the prospect from beneath his lowered heavy brows, heavy with wisdom, and lowered, like a head of wheat full of hard, ripe grain. Then he took his pipe from his mouth, knocked it sharply

against the ancient stone walls of the dwelling, to empty its contents, and all this with great deliberation, for daddy was thinking it all over.

And he was watching his only daughter, the sprightly young image of her wide-eyed mother. Anne's eyes were very dark, and far apart under a low, broad forehead; and her mouth was generously large, and full of gleaming, strong white teeth, that looked whiter by contrast with her reddish-brown cheeks. Her hair dipped low over her temples; and, having been allowed this much freedom, for fashion's sake, was caught and sternly twisted into braids, and securely skewered with many pins at the back of her head. She was tall, square-shouldered, and as straight as her daddy, or as a young cypress tree.

"Read it again," he said thoughtfully.

Anne glanced at the postal card:

"You will report, ready to serve luncheon, at Dorcas Hall, on Monday next at noon."

That was all; it was so short, so peremptory, that Anne kept constantly turning the card over to, again and again, read the address. It was post-marked "Philadelphia," and correctly addressed. There was no mistake about the clear, crisp, woman's handwriting:

MISS ANNE FOREST
THE BIRCHES
MYLO, PA.

"She means me," said Anne dubiously.

"Who is She?" asked daddy.

"I haven't the slightest idea," replied Anne curiously, and then they both laughed, gaily, father and daughter; because they recalled a similar reply made by Alice in Wonderland.

And somehow their laughing cleared the atmosphere, for daddy's hand clasped his ready pipe; and, from the depths of a side pocket, he pulled forth a much-worn and frayed tobacco pouch, and proceeded to fill his pipe with much apparent content.

"Then tear it up," he said conclusively; and, having disposed of the matter to his own satisfaction, he lit his pipe and resumed his noon-hour meditation.

But Anne gathered up her belongings, including a basketful of neatly-darned stockings, and, with the postal card sticking out from her book as a marker, went indoors to seek for her busy mother.

II

DOMESTICITY

SHE found her mother in the dairy, enveloped in a blue-checked gingham apron that reached from the tip of her pointed chin to the round toes of her comfortable boots; of her appearance no more need be stated than the very evident probability that, when Anne grew to be twenty years older, she would look exactly like her.

"Mother," said Anne impetuously, her mind on the great subject, and the postal card, "I want to do something."

Mrs. Forest straightened her back with just a little effort that seemed to be growing; imperceptibly, but subtly, evasively, as the years went by, but none the less surely. In the same persistent way that gray hairs would appear in the dark coils that adorned her low forehead.

"Good girl," she smiled approvingly, "just

keep that churn handle moving for a few moments while I run into the kitchen and get your poor father's luncheon. He must be starving."

Anne began to turn the handle with a youthful energy and vim that sent the lumps of butter thumping against the inside of the barrel churn.

"Stop, Anne!" said her mother anxiously. "I had no idea it was so near coming. I must have been an hour churning, and I was in despair."

"I mean," continued Anne, solemnly, still possessed of one idea, and overlooking the happy present into a very doubtful future; "I mean that I want to do something for—for—other people."

Her mother skilfully overturned the churn and poured into a clean bright crock the fresh, foaming buttermilk.

"For the world," Anne went on dreamily.

"Hand me that dish, please—no the other

one—quick Anne. Dear me! I have so much to do just at this present moment."

Anne succeeded in finding a large, flat, yellow earthen dish, into which Mrs. Forest gathered two big handfuls, or as much as her two chubby hands could grasp, of rich, creamy butter. This she lowered into a shallow running stream of cool spring water that flowed leisurely through the dairy.

"There," she sighed contentedly, "that can wait for a little while, until we see about luncheon. I haven't the least idea what that untamed African is doing in my lovely kitchen."

She had not long to wait in order to satisfy her curiosity, for the young African was doing things in a way that could be heard for half a mile in either direction. The distance was not far from the low-roofed spring-house, through which a crystal stream of cold water was constantly flowing, called the dairy, and the frame addition to the old house, called the kitchen.

Even as they approached, and when they were no more than half-way across the intervening garden, just breaking into luscious sprouts of asparagus and red-stemmed rhubarb, a long shapeless leg, encased in a home-spun blue stocking, reached out from the kitchen door with the force and swing of a miniature catapult. At the farthest end of the leg was a foot, of extraordinary size and miscellaneous contours; and behind the kick came "the African's" voice, pitched high and indignant:

"Gone out o'yeer, yoh doggoned yaller devil!"

And then Bob, the cat, could be seen describing a parabolic curve, one end of which began at the toe of Juno, the African, and the other end finishing in the middle of the peony bed.

It really is remarkable how short the memory is of a cat.

Looking around in a dazed way, Bob saw Anne coming and ran to meet her.

She stooped to pick up the forgiving animal while her mother brushed past her into the thickest of the mess.

And it was a mess! The upset cream jug, a solitary bit of old Delf that Mrs. Forest had saved from the wreck of her girlhood home, lay smashed to small pieces on the hard stone hearth, in the middle of a wide-spreading pool of cream. From the half-opened oven door came the smell of roast pig; an odor so strong and pungent, of burning flesh, that Charles Lamb could never have smelled; for, if he had, he would never have written his famous essay.

It took some quick work to save that ham from the fiery furnace; to mop up the cream; to forget her grief over the loss of the only piece of china that she valued; and to appear calm and smiling, as mother always appeared, when Daddy Forest crossed his long legs under the dining table.

He commented approvingly on the appetizing appearance of the dishes; on the snowy

whiteness of the linen; on the dish of violets and apple blossoms in the centre of the table; and on the pink flush that tinged the cheeks of his comely wife.

With the flush was also a feverish sparkle of her eyes that seemed to the good man a certain sign of contentment and general good health.

"The work seems to agree with you" he nodded to his wife, "and as for Anne——"

And then came the burning question, but in an off-hand, tentative way.

"Monday next will be the fifth, will it not?" Anne asked, with her eyes fixed in a contemplative stare at the tip end of an apple blossom, "the fifth."

She was counting on her fingers, woman fashion; "to-day is Thursday, the first."

Daddy looked up from his plate with interest.

"By George! so it is; and Abe isn't half through with his plowing, and I forgot to

speak to Lukens about engaging his drill; we'll never get those oats planted, something always——"

"I sent Abe after the drill," said his wife, timidly; "it is here now."

Daddy sighed his relief and smiled his thanks across the table.

"That's good," he said, contentedly. "Now I will order some seed oats and——"

"We have the oats, you know," came from the little manager. "We saved thirty bushels from our own crop, you remember."

Daddy looked thoughtfully at the other end of the bough of apple blossoms.

"So we did, that's right; yes, I remember."

Then his wise head, crammed full of knowledge, hung lower over his plate.

Oh! Daddy was no farmer. But he loved the trees, and the ripening grain, and the great masses of hollyhocks that bordered the garden. And he heard voices in the swirling, rippling, murmuring creek; and the birds all

knew him for an easy-mark, so that the corn was scarcely planted before the flocks of pigeons, his own and his neighbors', held conventions in his fields and picked up every other grain before it could take root.

For daddy would not permit anybody to shoot the innocent-looking thieves, nor even molest the mischievous crows that swarmed over his farm at seed-time and harvest.

"To-day is Thursday the first," repeated Anne, a little more distinctly.

"Yes," replied daddy, reflectively. "A wonderful day in History; not for battles or catastrophies that usually go to make up History, but a day of days that seems to have been regarded for ages as the annual beginning of things."

He glanced across the table to the manager.

"Do you know, Louise, that our English forefathers used to begin milking their cows three times a day, beginning May first? For that reason they called the month tri-milki."

"My forefathers were not English," chirped Mrs. Forest, lightly. A bright vein of bantering good humor, and an inner deep love for her husband, was the golden thread that ran through all of her life. Add to that the fact that she was entirely unselfish, and utterly unconscious of herself—and her character stands revealed.

"Well, Irish then," retorted daddy as he beamed on her over the rims of his spectacles.

"The Irish, by the way, are not Saxon at all. They come from the great Keltic race that originated in France, and——"

He was off again, that wise old daddy, on a new lead as keen as a fox-hound when something has crossed the trail.

Anne brought him back resolutely.

"To-day is the first of this May, daddy, whatever happened thousands and millions of years ago, and next Monday will be the——"

"Undoubtedly, my daughter, but to understand the present one must know something of

the past. But we need not go back so far as that, say hundreds and hundreds of years ago, the month of May was named in the Latin from Maius, or Majus, or Majores, the elders; and the month of June from Juniores the younger, in honor of the two bodies of the Roman people into which Romulus had divided them, the elders for counsel and the juniors for action. There are other authorities however who——"

"John," interrupted the manager, quietly, but firmly.

"Eh! yes, of course; let me help you to another bit of this delicious ham, Emily."

And Aunt Emily, the fourth member of the little family at the "Birches," who has been sitting primly and with a fine expression of Christian forbearance on her sharply-defined features, must of necessity come on the scene.

III

POOR AUNT EMILY

AUNT EMILY, or poor Aunt Emily, as she was more frequently called by those who best knew her, was a married woman without a husband. Be it said, however, that she had captured the man fairly; but he had slipped through her fingers, after five years of refined, and, in fact, indefinable misery, which he was now trying to forget. She was the English string that tied John Forest to the land of his forefathers. It had happened that a distant relative died murmuring John Forest's name, and, unfortunately, his address, in the ears of her numerous family; and one pair of ears, again unfortunately, had received the hint and acted accordingly.

That is how Aunt Emily came to visit at the "Birches," and was still visiting, with no sign of a departure. There was no resemblance

whatever between her and "Cousin John," as she publicly and persistently proclaimed him on every possible occasion.

She was angular, gawky, flat-chested, and cynical.

Her complexion was of a mottled cream color. Her eyes were of no color at all; the palish green, brown, and gray of her pupils being not sufficiently defined to determine either, though one should take the trouble.

Her hair, so much as could be seen under numerous false puffs, was also colorless, and must have taxed her ingenuity to match it.

Add to this the fact that she also dabbled in Buddhism, the occult sciences, and read Omar Khayyam; was a college graduate, and a believer in woman's rights, in woman's equality with man, and in the superiority of wives over their husbands. She was also an active member of the International Woman's Political Equality and Suffrage Association—but here we come to the wild mustard, a little seed of

which, having been skilfully planted in Anne's rich and fallow brain, spread and grew with a rapidity unequalled by anything in Nature.

At first daddy paid no more attention to Anne's disturbed mind than he did to the bunch of pretty little yellow flowers that had begun to bloom in the grassy edge of his oats field.

As for the manager, she was too busy to give it any attention whatever.

And so the thought, so cunningly planted by Aunt Emily, grew and spread in Anne's brain until it became the one question of her life.

On one occasion, instigated by Aunt Emily, she had asked daddy many searching inquiries regarding the womanly worth and general superiority over men of that red-haired termagant, Queen Elizabeth, who drank strong beer and swore like a trooper, and of Catherine of Russia, that infamous creature who lived such a life that historians may not write it, who was addicted to drunkenness, and who died in her cups.

These were Aunt Emily's two truly noble women—her heroines. But she never said a word about Catherine de Medici, and her fearful massacre of St. Bartholomew's day; or of Bloody Mary of infamous memory or of the unspeakable Lucrezia Borgia.

It is so easy to scatter the seed of wild mustard in a young and fallow brain; but so hard to weed it out.

Anne was holding the postal card in her finger tips, anxiously determined to press the question to a conclusion. Little wrinkles of discontent furrowed her fine, wide brow, while her eyes seemed to lose their lustre and brilliancy in their sombre fixedness.

She was no longer the joyous, fervent, palpitating, charming country maid, who used formerly to flit around the farm radiating happiness and contentment—like the home-making robins.

She was now brooding over the sorrows and miseries of myriads of unknown others and

overlooking the troubles and anxieties of those with whom she came in daily contact. And in this mystical, puny dreaming she was longing for a responsibility that God never intended for her feminine shoulders.

Imagine Spot, the little white and black heifer, frisking and gambolling over the cool moist meadow land, growing up naturally and rationally to a fine young milch cow. Imagine Spot suddenly filled with the idea that she must take her place alongside of old Charlie, the plow horse; put a collar around her soft white neck and tug and pull in the hard iron trace-chains!

Imagine a world in which there is no division of labor and of responsibilities; in which the male and the female share equally and alike the same burdens and the same duties! Or suppose that Mrs. Robin, who has just feathered a lovely little nest in the forked limbs of an old apple tree, who has helped her mate to care for a brood of young squawking birdies;

suppose that Mrs. Robin would suddenly jump out of her nest and, from a distant limb, accost her mate in words to this effect:

"Look here, Dickie, old mate, I'm tired of laying those everlasting blue eggs; and of raising broods of little Dickie birds; besides I think it's selfish, and I want to do something for others. Now there's an old grey fox over in Lukens's farm that is half starved. I know, of course, that he is an old thief; I've watched him, when he thought I wasn't looking, carry off old Easy-mark's chickens; but, nevertheless, he excites my pity, the poor old thing, and I think it is my duty—my d-u-t-y, Dickie, old mate—and I just have to go and take care of him."

And off she flew, leaving Dickie to look after the birdies! And Dickie would have been justified in scratching the back of his head with his sharp little claw; of swelling up his indignant, feathery chest, and in piping his most discordant note:

"Well! of all the fool birds!"

But while Anne was determined to bring matters to some state of action, nevertheless she must first enjoy that delightful instinct which has belonged to her sex ever since Eve first turned the apple over and over again, to see who sent it; even to the present time, when every daughter of Eve will turn a sealed envelope over and over again, trying to imagine who sent it, before breaking the seal.

Likewise, while Eve knew full well that it was sent her by the Devil—but here the parallel ceases; for while the Devil unquestionably had his finger, or tail, in the sending of that postal card, Anne did not know it, or things might have happened differently. She knew, however, that it came from the headquarters of the I. W. P. E. S. A.—an American branch of that fungus growth of "wild woman" that had sprung full grown over night from mellow surroundings, of which Aunt Emily was an active member. She knew that,

because the initials were very plainly printed on the card.

But she was honest in her implied ignorance of the sender's identity, entirely honest, as she twisted the card in her hand and asked the table in general, or any one in particular, to unravel the mystery of her unknown correspondent.

"I spoke to our president about you," explained Aunt Emily, calmly.

The manager looked up suddenly with an alarmed expression on her face. "Oh, Emily," was all she said; but, coming from the manager, in that tone of voice, it was equivalent to a slap or a pinch from a less worthy person.

But daddy was more specific in his comments:

"Then you had no business to do anything of the kind," he commented, sternly; "and while you are a guest in my house I will appreciate your silence on a subject that disturbs and annoys us."

His fine blue eyes were luminous and fixed

with a determination that was more remarkable because so rare. It had happened, just previously, that Aunt Emily was explaining the feminine unrest in England, by repeating the untruth that "all Englishmen were such brutes in their attitude towards women."

"It is not very nice in you to speak that way of my parents—of your own parents—Emily."

That was all that he had said; but the same dangerous glitter had shown in his indignant eyes, and Aunt Emily had been silenced.

But this was the final straw, the limit to the good man's patience and forbearance; so that he actually said "my house," and not "our home," as was his invariable custom.

To be sure, it was his house incontestably, indisputably; he had toiled and sweated, and borne the heat of the day, even before the little manager had appeared on the scene, to save and scrimp and screw; so that he might buy a little farm for himself. He had burned the

midnight oil in reading and study. He had made bricks without straw—like the children of Israel—for his parsimonious taskmasters, and employers; and now he was at Home—with a contented wife and daughter.

Certainly he might say "my house," and no doubt he meant it, to strengthen his authority; but the moment he said it he was sorry; and, manlike, or like the son of an English brute, he immediately apologized to his women.

But Aunt Emily, taking advantage of his weakness, at once burst into tears—that formidable manœuvre of the cunning female—and ostentatiously arose from her seat at the table and left the room.

Anne's face hardened disagreeably; her dark eyes grew big and round, and her voice was full of a child-woman tragedy:

"Father, you are always opposing me, always."

Then she, too, burst into tears and followed poor Aunt Emily out into the garden.

It would have been funny—it was funny—to see this chit of a girl, unsophisticated, innocent, sympathetic, aping the mature and thoroughly-seasoned older woman. But to daddy it was not funny at all; on the contrary, it gave him the most agonizing, the keenest pain. He had noticed at once that she addressed him as "Father" for the first time in her short life.

He had felt her anger, her contempt; and it made him very sad. He must be getting very old and quarrelsome, very disagreeable. The whole fabric of his little home was tumbling down about his ears—he was all wrong. The patient work of his hands, the thoughtful endeavor of his brain, the wistful longings of his lifetime all wrong—for two of his women were in tears, and he was the cause of it.

He framed his forehead in his two honest hands, his elbows on the table.

"Am I really so brutal?" he asked his wife, who sat serenely through the "tempest in a

teapot," who in fact was smiling—actually smiling.

"Daddy dear"—her voice was like a caress, soft and musical—"you are the dearest and best of men; and the child didn't mean what she said. Forget it."

IV

THE LITTLE MANAGER

"WELL, mother, don't you think I know as much as Abe? I mean don't you think I know as much—rather that I am as intelligent as he is, and, therefore, should be allowed to vote?"

The manager looked up quietly from her sewing. "You were not making a fair comparison," she said, thoughtfully. "If you would ask me whether I thought that Juno should vote as well as Abe, you would be comparing people in the same class, and I would have answered you at once, 'no'; because Abe, ignorant as he is, is better qualified to vote than Juno; but if you would ask me, have I not the same right of intelligence that would qualify me for voting as Harold Lukens, the comparison would be fair, but I would have to answer in practically the same way, 'no'."

Anne's cheek took on a flush of rosy hue.

"I don't think Harold is particularly well educated," she said spitefully, and her mother smiled.

"Nevertheless he is better qualified to vote than you are; but why all this trouble about voting; of what are you thinking? Has Aunt Emily been talking to you about Woman's Rights and other nonsense that seems to be clouding the minds of women to-day, so that they are unable to intelligently perform their own duties?"

Anne hung her head and answered with some hesitation: "Poor Aunt Emily is always talking about rights of women and must have had a great deal of experience and knowledge."

The manager looked up quickly; if it were possible to introduce so discordant a note in her character, it might be said that she was angry. "Your Aunt Emily is an excellent example of all her class. I have noticed that in all of those women I have met, there lurks a spirit of discontent."

Anne looked out wistfully over the shimmering wheat, her eyes fixed intently on the world. The little farm and all of its daily monotonous duties seemed to be commonplace and ordinary. In her brilliant young mind there appeared stately palaces, peopled with handsome men and women; gorgeous settings, in fact the fantastic mirage; the wonderful castles in the air that fill the heart and brain. The road to this seemed to lay through the teachings of Aunt Emily, but when she compared her with her mother's contented and happy disposition, there seemed to be a great void. Anne was not an idle girl, on the contrary she longed with every passionate impulse of her fine nature to be one of the Workers. She wanted to do something, to be something, to lead and not to follow dumbly in the ranks. Unquestionably this was born in her; but also it had been carefully cultivated and nurtured by her father, so that the soil was rich and deep, and in fact ready for the growth of what-

ever should be planted therein, and Aunt Emily had cunningly discovered this lovely field of her mind and had sown the seeds of her vicious weeds.

For a long time they sat quietly, mother and daughter, without saying a word, both intent on their own thoughts and both fearful lest the next word would shatter the hopes of one and the happiness of the other. It was Anne who first broke the silence.

"But, how," she said,—and the question seemed to be a vital one with her,—"but how is it that you and daddy seem to be perfectly happy and contented with—with just the farm? You never go anywhere, you never seem to want to leave, you don't want to do something big and noble, you don't want to be anything," and here she stopped.

Her mother stopped sewing for a few minutes, and then looking squarely into Anne's big black eyes, the very counterpart of her own, took both her hands, and pressed them

slightly: "Anne, my dear child, happiness and success is in one's own heart; you will never find it in the heat of political strife; you will never find it in associating yourself with other people's miseries."

Anne interrupted impulsively: "But that is selfish, you think only of yourself. Aunt Emily says that we are to forget ourselves and work for the good of the world, for the good of the community, for the benefit of the human race."

Again her mother pressed the little brown sunburnt hand lovingly, caressingly: "Your Aunt Emily devoted so much time to these things, Anne dear, that she forgot her own duty. It is not necessary to tell you that Aunt Emily is not happy; that she is not a leader; that she is not a success; that she has practically wrecked her life, you can see that for yourself."

Anne was thoughtful but not convinced. "You have always lived this life, mother; you have always been quietly content to just

drudge along in the country, forgive me if I say you know nothing else."

The little manager smiled brightly. "There you are mistaken, my daughter. For years I was one of the working girls, so called, for years I was filled with the same longing which now possesses your soul; to be on the firing line, to stand shoulder to shoulder with the workers—with the men workers—to be something, as you say; and I thank God every day of my life that your dear father came along and took charge of me.

Anne's eyes opened wide with astonishment. "But you never told me this, you have never spoken of it."

There was just a suspicion of moisture in Mrs. Forest's eyes. "No," she said softly, "I have been too happy to talk about it, but I know what is best for you and I tremble for your future when I see the discontent, for it is nothing more, that is impelling you to leave those you love and those who love you, and to

engage in striving for the unattainable. Let me tell you"—and she spoke quite seriously—"you will find the association, which you have evidently been invited to join, is composed almost entirely of unhappy women. Women with a grievance of some kind or other. Daddy and I have no grievance, and so we are happy and contented with the lot that God has given us. But there is Juno in the kitchen making an awful racket and I must go and see what is the trouble."

The day was now fading into evening. In the western sky the sun, resembling a huge fiery red ball, was slowly sinking behind the bit of woods that bordered the creek. The sleepy birds were noisily chattering and disputing the choice places on the leafy trees; and daddy was resting, his arms folded across the top rail of the fence that enclosed his wheat field. Here and there, all over the field, a pretty little yellow flower dotted the deep green of the flourishing, well-set grain—the wild mustard.

He viewed the prospect with dreamy contentment. The field promised three or four hundred, perhaps five hundred, bushels of wheat, at one dollar a bushel. It was an easy calculation; and daddy was already spending the money, even before the crop was grown. Item, a new gown for the manager, that was the first and most important thing of all, together with anything else that she might desire, bless her dear heart! and music lessons for Anne; a little vacation perhaps for the family, after harvesting—Anne wanted to go to Europe.

Then he thought that he might build a straw shed, and a cement reservoir, and another horse to match Charlie was needed very badly, also a mowing machine, and a new horse rake; and the old house needed painting—the last crumb of dried paint having fallen off the old timbers long ago. And then, if after all these things had been provided for, and if he had any money left, he thought that perhaps he might

indulge himself and buy "a set of English Reprints, 30 volumes small 4to, large paper edition"—he had it all by heart, from constantly reading a morsel of an almost worn-out Catalogue, that he had been carrying in his vest pocket for years. The set had been "reduced to $25," and was most tempting in its fulness. The possession of those rare volumes would be the fruition of his labors, the joy of his life. Among them were such lightsome effusions as: Lyly's Euphues, Earle's Microcosmographie, Habington's Castara, Udall's Roister Doister, Milton's Areopagitica, Ascham's Toxophilus, and the rest, that he longed to bore into, with the zest and satisfaction of a cut-worm, boring into the roots of one of his own fruit trees.

Anne brought him back to the realities of life by tip-toeing up behind him over the soft grass, and slipping her arm through his.

"I didn't mean to be so rude, daddy," she said penitently; "indeed I am awfully sorry."

Her face showed contriteness of spirit; she was full of remorse and humility.

Of course daddy encircled her with his strong arm, and all was forgiven. All was forgiven but not forgotten. Anne was a persistent child, and a thought once having found lodgment in her mind must be worked out to a conclusion. Anne would never compromise with an idea of good or evil. If it was a good idea, then it must prove itself so to her approving conscience; but if the thought were evil, likewise it must be proven evil to her inner self, when out it must go, and that was the end of it.

The talk just had with her mother was illuminating but not convincing, and she turned to her father for more light on the subject that seemed to her of vital importance.

She pressed his arm coaxingly:

"Daddy, don't you think that I'm as good as Harold Lukens?"

And the good man, falling blindly into the meshes, indignantly affirmed that Harold

Lukens wasn't good enough, whatever that may mean, physically, morally, or mentally, to tie up his little daughter's shoe strings, or to sit with her at the same table; as for intelligence, well!

All of which constituted a fine preliminary for her next question which in the sporting vernacular might be called a " feeler."

" Harold can vote, can't he? " she asked, innocently.

" Vote! Oh, yes, he can vote; sure. Why, let me see, Harold must be—well, he's three years older than you—twenty-four; why, of course he can vote. He voted since he was twenty-one."

Then came the *coup de grâce*—the finishing stroke to the foolish father's somnolency.

" Then why can't I vote? I am better than he is, and I am twenty-one years old."

V

MERE MEN

DADDY could talk better and more convincingly from his corner of the porch than from any other location. Somehow, with the whole farm in front of him, the sense of being out of doors, the incentives for true and pure utterances came to him from the great trees, that nodded and fluttered with every zephyr, nodded and whispered a language with which daddy was familiar.

And the bursting, unfolding of the flowers, that perfumed the balmy air. He would watch them day by day, and care for them until he knew their meaning also. He knew that in plant life was sex, as well as in the animal and the human; that sex was symphonious with love—that love was Divine.

He was smoking his comforting pipe, and between the whiffs he answered Anne's question.

"You can not vote, my daughter, because you are a woman," he said with great finality. "And notwithstanding all that has been said and written on the subject that appears to me as sufficient of itself. A man is a man, and a woman is a woman, and it is utter folly to attempt to disregard that fact. The most convincing appeal a woman has, the keenest weapon, the strongest force at her command to do, or to be anything, is her sex—and the divine mission of her sex is motherhood."

"How about an unmarried woman who owns property?" questioned Aunt Emily, somewhat sharply. "She certainly has a right to vote; why should she pay taxes without a vote? Take the widow Lukens, for example."

"The widow Lukens does not pay taxes for the privilege of voting any more than I do, or any other man."

"Then why should she pay taxes at all?"

Daddy puffed, with exasperating slowness, his straight-stemmed English pipe:

"Because she must pay for police protection, for the maintenance of roads, and public schools. You might as well ask me why I must pay a public school tax here, when, as a matter of fact, I sent Anne to a private school.

"The widow Lukens pays taxes on her property because she pays the amount assessed thereon, whether she owns it or anybody else. She only pays her share for the protection that makes it safe and possible for her to live on the property at all. At any rate, Harold is voting regularly, so the property is also represented, as you say, in government."

"Oh! yes, Harold again," said Anne, spitefully.

"Well! what about Harold?" came a rich manly voice from the darkness of the shrubbery. "Methinks I heard a voice say 'Harold'," and the son of the widow Lukens advanced into the dimly-lighted circle on the porch, and promptly sat down on the big old-fashioned high-backed settle beside Anne.

That young woman was blushing furiously, but in the fortunate darkness she blushed unseen.

"Speak of angels," said the manager, cheerfully, "and you will hear the fluttering of their wings."

"Or of the Devil," amended Aunt Emily, grimly, "and one of his imps will appear."

She always spoke in a high metallic nasal key, and apparently without moving a muscle of her face.

Harold located her, and, perhaps unconsciously, moved up closer to Anne.

The light shining through one of the little windows fell full on his handsome young face. It was flushed and moist, from the exertion of crossing two large fields, and of jumping a couple of four bar fences that separated his home from the "Birches."

He had a fine straight nose, waving brown hair, laughing blue eyes, and being over six feet tall, his good-natured, tolerant manner was

like that of a great New Foundland dog, who knew his strength, but scorned to use it.

"I merely remarked," began Anne, having somewhat recovered her composure, "I merely remarked upon the insignificant fact that you could vote while I couldn't, that's all."

"Gee! Anne, you don't want to vote, do you? You're not a suffragette!"

Harold's voice showed mixed emotions—between surprise and anxiety—the idea of Anne!

She resented his words, and resolved to abase him, then and there. "Why, Harold," she inquired, sweetly, "don't you like Suffragettes?"

"I certainly do not," he answered promptly. "Honestly, I think they are the craziest set of freaks that ever came down the pike," which might have been true, but none the less was void of tact. Aunt Emily's face was in the darkness, her back to the wall; but her eyes were glowering though veiled through half-shut lids.

"Women ought to be free, to do as they please," said Anne confidently.

"All they are after is to get into the papers," retorted Harold. "Why, actually they want the vote in order to reform the world, to make laws for that purpose, and still they defy all legislative procedure."

Harold had but recently graduated from the University Law School in Philadelphia, and had just affixed a glaringly new tin sign on the door of a small room over the drug store in Mylo, which will account for his occasional lapses into special pleading.

Anne ignored the legal aspect of the controversy, but denied emphatically the love of notoriety amongst those women who would win their "rights" by fire and sword.

"They're no worse than men," she declared, inconsequently.

"Huh! well, they certainly are; they just love to be in the limelight. They are discontented, every one of them; they are tired of

home life, and too lazy to do their daily work; it's all too dreadfully dull, too monotonous. Then when they are reminded of the fact that the domestic routine is as much their duty as man's business is his duty, they shirk and whine, and talk such tommy-rot as slavery and women servitude—it makes me tired."

Anne moved away from him as far as possible, which was no great distance, to the extreme corner of the old settle.

"Mercy!" she said scornfully, "it's a wonder that you would have anything to do with women."

There was an unpleasant silence for some minutes. Then daddy's genial voice was heard:

"There are women, and women," he announced, oracularly; "just as there are men and men; there are women who glory in the making of a home; who are really partners in the scheme of Life, with their men—partners in the real sense of the word, by acting their own parts, and not attempting the parts al-

lotted by Nature to the other sex. Those are the real women. There is nothing more unseemly than a mannish woman, unless it would be a womanly man. Can you imagine an association of men who have banded themselves together with the avowed intention of discarding the tiresome monotony of business, the daily grind that is enslaving their minds, and thwarting their intellectual growth, can you imagine such a body of men determined to take up domestic duties—women's occupations—and of abandoning their stores and offices?"

The manager laughed heartily. "Oh, John, what nonsense you are talking. No man would think of such a thing for a moment."

"But suppose they did?" he persisted, "suppose they did, what would women think of them?"

"I know what one woman would think of them," answered Mrs. Forest, emphatically.

"Exactly," said daddy—although what that one woman thought could only be surmised, as

he handed Harold his tobacco pouch—"exactly, there is no doubt of it."

The young man produced his briar, class '13, with much pride, and filled the same with a deft manipulation that was the result of long and arduous practice. With the ignited weed glowing brightly under his determined nose, one could see flash light miniatures of his resolute keen blue eyes.

"Why take those militants," he puffed forth eagerly, "just crazy for notoriety—and such blamed cowards, too; they do all kinds of fool things to annoy the public, and then when the public gets mad, and tries to duck them in the river, they cry, and call for help! and police! to save them from the mob. Oh! they are a dandy lot, all right; they break the laws, and then appeal to the law for protection."

Anne got up from her corner of the settle and took a low rocking-chair, the farthest removed from Harold, and near the door.

But that dunder-headed youth, enchanted

with his own eloquence, went fatuously on his foolish way. There are some men who need a brick house to fall on them in order to stop them from talking, nothing else will do it.

"And all their tommy-rot silliness in the name of patriotic, public-spirited immolation on the altar of duty. Gee! imagine Jeanne d'Arc, when she got into a mix-up, crying like a sissy girl, and calling for the police!" And so on and so forth, and much more of the same kind; until it gradually dawned on him that the argument was very like the handle of a jug—all on one side, so he concluded in his strong voice: "Anne, I tell you the suffragettes are a lot of wild women, absolutely crazy."

Mrs. Forest answered him: "Anne retired some time ago, Harold; she was very tired and asked to be excused."

"So will I, Mr. Lukens," said Aunt Emily, rising and extending a cold, waxy hand. "I have been so interested in your remarks; you know I am an ardent suffragette."

VI

THE DISCONTENTED

THEN Mrs. Forest followed Anne, and the two men were left alone in the starlight.

Both drew deep inhalations from their glowing pipes, in the dogged way that men have when they wish to hide their blunders.

"You didn't know?" puffed daddy, with great commiseration.

"About Anne?" puffed Harold, his inner soul speaking first, and his heart as heavy as lead. "No, I had no idea that Anne——"

"About her Aunt Emily," corrected daddy.

"Oh, her Aunt Emily——"

A long silence intervened, interrupted only by the mournful call of an owl; and an occasional twitter of a sleepy bird, in the wide-spreading branches of an enormous chestnut tree.

"Harold," said daddy, as he knocked the top

film of ashes from his pipe, "have you ever heard of the great Army of the Everlastingly Discontented?"

"Oh! I have an idea of what you mean; but as for an Army——"

"But there is an Army—an organized army —with its captain, colonels, and generals, fighting and quarrelling, in great and exhausting campaigns, moving over the country from one place to another, rushing about, in and out in the world, fighting in guerrilla bands, and predatory warfare, holding disorderly meetings."

"What is their object?" asked Harold, incuriously.

"The uplift of women; the emancipation of the poor-house slave—the plaything of men —the down-trodden, beaten, and oppressed; the poor, despised, forlorn, abused Women."

"Never heard of that class," said Harold, absently. "I suppose there are such women in the world. Where are they?"

Daddy chuckled. "Ask Anne's Aunt Emily. I have been curious myself to find some of these miserable never-had-a-chance creatures of whom she is always speaking; and I've travelled about a bit in my time, too."

"What did she say?"

"She said that they could be found in all countries and in every clime, but chiefly amongst the lower classes. I told her that the men of that same class were not having such a jolly time either; not any that I have noticed."

"How did that strike her?"

"Oh! she said it was their own fault; and that it would all be changed when women get the vote."

"Just how, I wonder," mused Harold, as he stretched his long legs, comfortably, from the settle to a low rocking-chair opposite.

"Well! she said that they were going to keep everything and everybody stirred up and uncomfortable."

"Including the lower classes, I suppose," yawned Harold.

"Well, she said everybody, and of course the lower classes are just as much a part of the human family as the middle classes, or the upper classes; they, altogether, form the body politic that is to be stirred up, and irritated, and annoyed, and kept from quietly attending to their own business until finally everybody gets so—so——"

"Damn!" suggested Harold.

"Exactly, so damn mad that they will break out all over and—and——"

"Smash things," said Harold.

"Just so," daddy agreed; "and just where the women will come out after the riot is over, the Lord only knows!"

"I can make a guess," suggested the young man, confidently, as he sprawled his six feet of bone and muscle more comfortably over the two chairs; "the men won't be underneath; you can bet on that."

"Well," argued daddy, "judging from the past, and that is the only possible way to forecast the future, these women movements have never succeeded; but they have always caused a great deal of discomfort, and more or less unhappiness, and by the way, every one has his own idea of what constitutes human happiness. There have always been fussy people who are everlastingly discontented with the existing order of things and who are continually trying to reform them."

"Sure," commented Harold, lazily.

"Well, reforms move very slowly; you can't make a man better by kicking in his ribs; so when the reforms are at last accomplished, things have adjusted themselves by natural growth; so that nobody cares a—a——"

"Damn!" suggested Harold seductively; and daddy was so engrossed with his subject that he seized on the word almost unconsciously, and naturally, but he put it more mildly.

"A tinker's dam," he qualified, "about the reform itself, and less of the reformers who have fussed and fumed, and stood in the burden and heat of the day, and incidentally in the bewitching limelight of newspaper notoriety, in their frantic exertions to make everybody uncomfortable. I mean that when the reform arrives, in its own good time, and arrive it will providing it is worth while, then another set of idiotic reformers will spring up, like a swarm of pestilent mosquitoes, stinging and irritating, and prodding along another human reform that will not advance one jot faster; no more than old Charlie, the plow horse, will plow more acres in a day when tormented with their provoking stings."

Daddy's pipe was out and he refilled it with fresh tobacco. "For my part," he mumbled between the quick drafts of a new fire, "for my part it seems to me that we might have a good deal of comfort and happiness if we would only settle down and just grow."

"Natural progress," said Harold, briefly.

"That's it—why, look at that chestnut tree."

Harold raised himself slightly on his elbow, to gaze at the enormous growth that stood outlined, in silent majesty, against the starry heaven.

"Could any fussy reformer have accelerated its growth? I say, could any frantic madman, or woman, have hurried it forward to maturity, before its time?"

Daddy did not wait for his answer; he was now in full swing, and in fine form:

"No, not by one inch or by one day. But the most curious thing about this woman's movement is that it is not a new reform at all, but a very old one."

"About fifty years old," said Harold thoughtfully; "the woman's rights bill was first introduced in the English Par——"

Daddy interrupted him—"Fifty years! Why, twenty-five centuries ago there was more

social and domestic freedom for the Æolian women, and they were far better educated than the women of to-day. They were successful authors, had their own clubs, were uplifted to the very highest point of cultivation, in music, and poetry, mingled on an equal footing with the male sex, and unrestrained, in fact aided by popular approval, indulged in their wildest dreams and emotions, until their passions ran riot. They had every comfort and luxury that wealth and delightful environment could give them. A country that was one large garden of perfumed flowers, with countless fountains of living waters; fruits of the South, luscious and in plenty, and the soft air was full of the songs of rare birds. Their religion was that of Beauty."

Harold arose and stretched his long frame.

"Yes, I know who you have in mind, Sappho; I remember the painting by Alma Tadema; she—er—jumped into the sea from the cliff somewhere—oh—Leucas."

"A case of over-cultivation of what we now call the higher education, of——"

"John," came a chiding voice from a window overhead; "do you realize that it is past twelve o'clock?"

"Well, by all the signs of the Zodiac! so it is," said daddy, as he held his watch in the ray of feeble lamplight that issued from a window at his back; "let me tell you, Harold, that a prudent wife is worth more than all the petticoated philosophers, crack-brained heroines, or maudlin sentimentalists in the whole category of suffragettes."

"Good-night."

Was it a woman who got up silently from a garden seat in the shade of the great chestnut tree? A woman in black raiment who stole away, vanished in the darkness? Daddy strained his eyes in the effort to fix the moving object, then he removed his bedimmed spectacles, clouded with dampness of the night, and looked again; but he could distinguish nothing.

VII

THE WAY OF A MAID

THE next morning the birds were talking to each other; there is no doubt about it. Watch Bob, that winking, blinking, unconcerned yellow cat, as he saunters carelessly around the thick foliage of a lilac bush, the one nearest to that low-boughed maple. On that maple Mr. and Mrs. Robin have built a fine summer residence, and Nature has blessed them with a home full of dicky birds; the youngsters are growing lustily, and are crowding each other, so that there is danger of one falling over the edge of their nest, to the grass in front of the lilac bush. Now watch Mr. Robin as he circles around the lilac bush; discovers Bob, who is crouching close to the earth, and without piping a note, flies back to Mrs. Robin and tells her of the impending danger, of the presence of that miserable yellow cat. Tell her? Why of course he tells her! If you watch them closely

you will understand their conversation by their expressive twittering and movements. Now observe him, as he leaves the nest in charge of Mrs. Robin, while he flies around over the lilac bush, and suddenly alights within a foot of Bob's nose! Note his feeble little "tweak, tweak," and how he drags a wing as he hops away—a little—just a little farther away. Notice Bob, that foolish animal who thinks he knows as much as a Robin; watch him as he suddenly springs on the bird; and lands, with empty paws, on the sharp gravel of the driveway. Then look at Robin, away up on the swinging bough of an apple tree, over the hedge in an adjoining orchard. Listen to his mocking, jeering laugh; and see how unconcerned Bob tries to appear; how dignified he seems as he walks slowly away toward the stable.

Talk? Why, for a certainty they can talk to each other; and there are some humans who can understand their language.

Now take Mr. Redwing over there in the meadow. He and his little speckled mate built a charming summer nest, of rootlets and weed stalks, in the top of a grass hammock; and they are now feeding a family of five little redwings on choice morsels of worms and brown-tail caterpillars. Breakfast is over, and Mr. Redwing—a fickle old bird—has flown away from his family ties, and is sitting on a top rail of the pasture fence, flirting with several young females of his acquaintance. Every minute or two he jumps to the top of a post and whistles.

"Conk-a-ree-e!"

Just from sheer happiness. His shrill whistling awoke Anne from a troubled sleep, in which were mingled dreams of duty and adventure; of heroic effort; of sublime devotion to The Cause. In a vague way she felt that the dreams were warnings, and directions, urging her to commit herself, like Jeanne d'Arc, to the saving of her country. She was not quite

sure just what it was that needed saving; there was nothing in her environment that needed any heroic work to set it right; nothing that was obvious or perceptible to her young and healthy senses; but, there must be something that was wrong, or why would Aunt Emily and all the rest of that great Army of the Everlastingly Discontented be fighting to set it right?

Anne rose and went to the window. A golden glow was over everything. The soft breeze of the summer morning rustled the leaves of the trees beneath her; and, laden with the delicious perfume of fruit blossoms, breathed a loving greeting as it lightly touched the soft tresses of her dark hair.

Beyond the orchard the rising sun was gleaming through a bewildering, scintillating group of foliage, moist with tiny glittering drops of a recent shower. The tall grass in the orchard, swaying to and fro in the light breeze, was like the gentle undulating surface of a

southern sea, glistening and shimmering in silken waves.

Oh it was good—it was wholesome—it was most delectable!

Anne enveloped her charming person in the soft folds of a bright-colored kimona, slipped her little pink toes into a pair of fleecy-lined slippers, and sat down by the window, a beautiful picture in a most exquisite setting.

Then she thought over all the events of the previous evening. She recalled her anger over Harold's remarks; of her rudeness in leaving him without so much as a word in parting. What would he think of her—what would he say, and do?

With her chin buried in the palm of her plump little hand, her elbow resting on the deep, old-fashioned window seat, she pondered deeply over the hasty resolution that she had taken during the night, to treat him coldly and distantly; to no longer permit his assumption of superiority, of authority over her—for it

had come to this pass, forsooth, that he must needs dictate to her as to what she should say, and what she should do, or what she should be.

He was becoming entirely too dictatorial—altogether too manly.

And it is astonishing how rapidly she could collect and assemble in her memory so many instances dating back from her babyhood, in which he had, culpably, taken the lead; how he had always displayed so masterful a spirit.

In those childhood days when they played "soldiers," Harold always proclaimed himself captain, while she was only a private in the ranks; but when they played "horse" it was Harold who tramped in the snow and who pulled her little sleigh, on which she sat comfortably muffled in furs and warm woolens. Then again it was Harold who climbed the trees, to their very tops, in order to get for her the biggest, ripest cherries, and the sound and best apples—of course there were some things

a boy could do that a girl might not venture.

Then from beneath her window came a weird note, from the orchard, as Abe swished his sharp scythe in the tall grass:

> "My gal is a high-bohn lay-dee,
> She's my own little culled bay-bee."

And Anne knew that the day's work had begun.

Some hours later Anne tucked up her skirts —the road was somewhat muddy—and started to walk to the village. There was a short cut part of the way, a narrow path across the timothy field, now deep and lush with thick grass, nearly ready for the hay-making; and Anne's skirts were lifted a trifle, just a trifle, higher in crossing the field that was glistening with the tiny drops of the recent shower than was strictly conventional. But there was not a man in sight, and to the best of her knowledge there was not a man within a mile of her. So she strode along, with a swinging motion, light and

free, that brought a deeper tinge to the reddish brown of her healthy, lovely cheeks.

Meanwhile, Harold Lukens, concealed in the narrow hedge of trees and young undergrowth that bordered the field of timothy, was playing the part of Damon to his Musidora. It was by simple chance that he had walked along the shady side of the hedge; and, coming to an opening in the trees, had caught sight of Anne, who was walking toward him.

In another minute they would have met at a corner of the hedge and a four-rail fence; but in that minute Anne had placed her hands on the top rail and had vaulted the fence, with the fearless spring of a young filly. She had often done it before and she thought no more of the feat than did Harold, who had taught her; but that raiment of feminine servitude, her skirts, caught on a sharp projecting splinter and held her fast!

And while she tugged and pulled and struggled to free herself; and prayed inwardly that

no man would happen to pass along that unfrequented road, Harold came running to her assistance at top speed, arriving at the inopportune moment when she had succeeded in climbing the fence, backwards; and sat perched on the top rail, a burning red-faced bundle of feminine rage.

"I told you a dozen times," he scolded, foolishly, "never to vault from high ground to low; you might have broken your——"

Then something impelled him to look up into her blazing eyes.

"If you would stop preaching," she began, in a slow, carefully-restrained voice, "and break off this—this exasperating splinter." She was furious; and in her anger her dark eyes flashed, and her bosom heaved like an offended young goddess.

"Why, Anne," he said, coming close up to her; "I didn't know. Where is it? Oh, I see." And, with a sudden exhibition of his great strength, he broke off a piece of the rail

that was holding her, it must have been at least a third of its thickness, and threw it a hundred yards into the tall grass.

"There," he said, laughingly; "now, give me your hand."

"Now, please go away," she said with much suppressed emotion.

But he stood his ground.

"Why?" he asked, still smiling in his superior, provoking way; "are you going to spend the day perched on top of that fence like a—like a—oh! Anne!" he exclaimed suddenly, sincerely, "you are the most beautiful, the most——" Then he encircled her waist with one arm, and putting the other under her knees, he lifted her gently, reverently, from her perch to the ground.

Anne, being a woman, gave first aid to her gown; and finding it not much the worse for the strain put upon it, she gave second thought to the man, who stood glowering over her as though he wished to eat her.

"Did you see me coming across the hay field?" she inquired, carelessly, the while she stooped, and became suddenly busy pinning up a much abused skirt braid.

"Sure," answered Harold, innocently.

"All the way?"

"Well, you were about half way across—yes, about half way," he said, thoughtfully. Then the fatuous man smiled as a funny, or perhaps a pleasant, thought flitted through his brain. "Say, Anne, the grass was wet, wasn't it?"

Anne ripped off the torn braid, pins and all; and detached it with an energetic snap that would have parted a small cable. That was one of Harold's most provoking faults; he always treated her as his young—his very young sister.

"And you never even offered to help me," she said, reproachfully.

"Help you—where?"

"Over that horrid fence," she panted; and

one unacquainted with a woman's way would have imagined that her long drooping lashes veiled a tear.

That tactless man laughed again.

"Why, Anne, the breezy way you took that fence—you were over before I could take a step."

Then he laughed again, a joyous, mirthful chuckle that brought two dark red flushes to her cheeks.

"And yet you saw me coming, half-way across the field," she began slowly; "you saw me coming, oh, for ever so long a time, and yet you never even offered to help me," she turned away. "Good-by, Mr.—Lukens."

"But, Anne," he began to explain; "but I——"

"Oh, don't take the trouble of making an excuse; good-by."

She walked away with the exaggerated dignity of an offended child, but the fence barred her progress.

Here was a dilemma.

Would she jump it again? Never; or crawl humbly through it? Never; or turn back through the field? Never.

Harold was quick-witted; and he knew every panel of that fence. He ran hastily—perhaps a hundred feet—to a set of loose rails, let them down at one end and stood up, smiling:

"Here, Anne, please forgive me." She walked across the rails with the haughty step of a princess, across the rails and down the road toward the village, looking neither to the right nor to the left; never stopping, like Lot's wife, to look behind her.

Had she done so, she would have seen a tall perspiring young man replacing the rails, and driving them into the post holes with the force of a battering ram. She would have seen him straighten his broad muscular back, square his shoulders, and she might have heard him say, "Damn!"

Harold gazed after the comely figure, fast

fading into the distance, until a turn in the road removed Anne from his vision. He was not angry, but, what is worse in a good man, he was indignant; and his indignation reacted on his sense of justice, and hurt his feelings. For the life in him he could not run after Anne, at that moment; although he would cheerfully, enthusiastically, have risked his very existence to save her from a sudden danger—and she was so beautiful.

He sighed heavily and mounted the rail where Anne had sat, gloomy and unhappy. She was so beautiful; the child had become a woman. . . .

The rattling of loose spokes in well-worn wheels aroused him from his reverie, and he looked up to see a woman, driving a fat white horse, in a yellow run-about. As she drew nearer he recognized the pale face and black garments of Aunt Emily, and he had a desperate notion of suddenly falling over backwards and taking his chances of landing on soft

ground, in the rank growth of weeds that bordered the fence; or of breaking his neck on a hidden boulder.

She saved him from the dangerous risk.

"Oh, Mr. Lukens," she called, "have you seen Anne? She started ahead, and I promised to overtake her; but Charlie is so slow."

She jerked the lines, said "tchk-tchk!" and played a bastinado on Charlie's fat sides with a big stick, as he slowly jogged along.

Harold pointed down the road toward the village. "She passed here some time ago," he called back; and Aunt Emily responded:

"We are going to a suffragette meeting; Anne is so anxious to join the——" but the rest was lost as the distance increased between them, in the noise of Charlie's great feet, clattering on the turnpike, and the incessant rattling of the loose spokes.

What Harold said is not fit to print.

VIII

THE CURRENT EVENTS CLUB

THE Village of Mylo was just one long, broad, irregular street that ran a winding course from an old water-power grist mill at one end to an ancient covered wooden bridge at the other. The distance between the two might have been a mile, more or less, as Jake Sharp, the township surveyor, used always to affirm, when questioned in court as to the accuracy of his measurements.

Along this street placed at every imaginable angle to its course, were buildings of an infinite variety; but there were none that would have attracted even a momentary attention from a passerby; the better of them represented the vintage of '61, when cast-iron porch railings and trellises ornamented the fronts of square red brick and green-shuttered houses; and when cast-iron cupids and dogs were placed in

studied positions of bad taste and ignorance, in juxtaposition with scrawny foliage of mangy-looking evergreens.

These were on the Main Street, as this only street of the village was called; and here also was the Episcopal church, with its back to the street, apparently; for the front door was in the back, and the steeple with its one discordant bell was directly over the chancel, the reason for which no person now living was old enough to remember; for the church had been built long before "Main Street," with its incongruous clutter of houses, had come into existence.

There was, also on Main Street, a dingy little court house, wherein was kept the records of the county; and wherein justice was dispensed, to suit the convenience, and personal opinions, of old Judge Blackwell, a gentleman of the old school, tall, stoop-shouldered, bald, and who, even at this period of time, adhered as closely as possible to the standing collar and

black stock of our forefathers. His long-tailed, loose-fitting black coat and soft black hat were as familiar objects, and as well known to every man, woman, and child of the town as was the town clock, that ran its erratic course in the squatty little tower above his court house.

Besides being a distinguished jurist whose decisions were seldom reversed, due probably to the same reason attributed to Dr. Johnson, "that no man dared question him," the Judge was the proud and irritable father of five unmarried daughters. Be it said, however, in all charity, that it was not their fault, singly or collectively, that they had remained in a state of single blessedness; that they had clung to their patrimonial tree until they were all ripe enough to fall without picking; ripe enough in fact to seize upon the doctrine of woman's rights with a grim determination; in which lay, barely concealed, the blasted hopes and aspirations of disappointed youth. The few eligible young men of the village and surrounding

country side who were brave enough to call on the Blackwell "girls" seldom possessed the courage to call again. They were either overawed by the stern majesty of the Judge, by the frigid propriety of Mrs. Blackwell, or by the overwhelming conversation of five higher-educated young ladies, who were constantly launching topics with which they were entirely unfamiliar, and consequently ill at ease.

It was in this company, in the Judge's house, within its red brick walls, and behind its discreetly-bowed green shutters, that Anne, accompanied by Aunt Emily, who had finally overtaken her, attended the regular meeting of the "Current Events Club," which met every Friday morning.

The membership of the Club included Miss Keen, a very timid, elderly maiden lady, who taught a score or more youngsters the rudiments of an education in a little frame school house. Then Mrs. Burleigh, the stout, in fact massive, life partner of the village banker;

and a mousie little woman who always dressed in gray, the cousin of somebody of intense respectability, who was married to somebody else, also an eminent personage, who everybody should know, but did not; this was Miss White.

They were no sooner assembled around the dining-room table when they all began to speak at once. Through the din, however, the high piping voice of Miss White could be heard at occasional intervals like the note of a piccolo in an orchestra of violins. She was reading from the morning newspaper:

"Murphy walked. Oldring hit the pill—or is it bit the pill—dear me, I wish I had some other subject than 'Sports and Pastimes.'" Miss White pushed her eye-glasses more firmly across her delicate nose, and resumed her reading: "Where was I? Oh, yes; Oldring hit the pill, or bit the pill, a short to third, and Collins popped—or is it hopped—it must be hopped, because they were playing ball, you know, and hopping around—Collins popped or hopped

out to Moriarity and Murphy stole second—stole it, my dears! Fancy stealing a thing to get the game." There was a buzzing comment.

"I call that cheating," asserted Mrs. Burleigh, in a deep contralto voice, "downright cheating."

The Club agreed. Then Miss White resumed her account of the National Game: "Storey went wild to centre field, and Flanigan died on first." Her voice trembled and quavered. "I don't care to read any more about such brutal sport," she announced with liliputian dignity; and Miss Keen, the timid and attenuated school marm, was called upon for light on the subject of the Army and Navy.

Now this is a ponderous subject; a stiff proposition for the experienced heads to consider; of men like George of England, Poincairé of France, William of Germany, and our own Roosevelt, assisted by numerous parliamentarians, deputies, senators, and congressmen. But their august conclusions were set at

naught, and torn to shreds, by this little band of women, who attacked the subject with the frolicsomeness of Angora kittens.

In a thin, incisive voice, Miss Keen read several articles clipped from current literature, all emphasizing the everlasting axiom: that, as nations grow rich and prosperous, so must they secure their wealth by adequate protection. When she had concluded, she observed:

"For my part, I don't see any use in having an Army and Navy. If women could vote we would soon have a law passed abolishing both; why do men want to go about seeking whom they may devour?"

Again the Club agreed with the speaker; and, could they have had their way, the Army would have been disbanded, and the Navy sold for old junk; to the intense delight and satisfaction, no doubt, of the other Powers.

On the subject of Trade and Finance, Mrs. Burleigh, the banker's heavy-weight partner, evolved a plan which, if business men would

only adopt, there would be no more miserable failures, no more trade convulsions; no panics of any kind. Her plan was very simple; and, as she said, was the result of her own observation. It was nothing more nor less than to always keep one's account good at the bank!

" I have noticed," she argued in her full rich voice, " that when a man's bank balance begins to dwindle, and get smaller, so his business is sure to decrease," which was arguing from the conclusion to the premises; or, as one might say, putting the cart before the horse. For which of us, oh toiling brothers, could not move mountains, had we but faith—in our bank accounts.

Then the Blackwell girls followed with Music and Drama, Religion, Political and Foreign Events, and Inventions and Discoveries. But it was reserved for Aunt Emily to expatiate on Woman's Rights. She arose from her seat at the head of the table, rested her sharp knuckles on its polished surface; and, leaning over to-

ward little Miss White she inquired, suddenly:

"How would you like to be some man's darling?"

"Me! I—" gasped Miss White, while a deep flush overspread her sensitive features, making them positively pretty. Many a man would have been glad to acknowledge the proprietory rights over the dainty little woman, had he but seen her at that particular moment.

There was the beginning of a gale of laughter, which Aunt Emily promptly averted by turning quickly to Miss Keen:

"Or you?" she queried abruptly.

Miss Keen, well knowing the absolute impossibility of such a condition in life for her, smiled faintly and shook her head, negatively.

"Or you—or you?" Aunt Emily went on, collectively, as she swept her long index finger in a semi-circle, in the outer circumference of which sat the Blackwell girls.

"His darling, his playmate; to amuse him,

to take care of him, and of his children," explained Aunt Emily.

A faint chorus of "Nos" went softly through the room, a mere zephyr of disapproval.

Aunt Emily seized the fluttering negative, and fanned it vigorously.

"No, of course not; why, such a question, to such women of brains and culture, is almost an insult to their intelligence."

"Well! I don't know about that," interrupted Mrs. Burleigh, loudly, her wifely instincts taking alarm as she thought of her "dearie," a mere whisp of a man, whose thin butternut face was always wreathed in smiles, and a few straggling whiskers.

"I refer to unmarried women," rejoined Aunt Emily, calmly, and Mrs. Burleigh subsided.

"What we women demand," she continued, "is perfect equality with man in every respect; with the right to walk side by side, and shoul-

der to shoulder with him, in politics and government." She paused for a moment, and Miss White interjected:

"I can't, for the life of me, see any more reason why women should walk side by side with men in politics and government than that she should march side by side with him in the army; or fight side by side with him in the navy. In both situations she seems to me to be entirely out of place. A good comrade; yes, a nurse, if she will, after the fight; a friend to rejoice or to comfort, after victory or defeat, in war or politics; but not a participant."

Miss White was a plucky little combatant, who could defend herself, and her opinions, against the entire village, if she wished. She reminded Anne of her little white bantam, which often chased the big, strutting turkey gobbler into an ignominious flight.

"But there won't be any army or navy," Miss Keen reminded her.

"Oh! that's absurd," flashed little Miss

White. "We must defend ourselves, our country, against the world."

A distinct hum of approval circled the room, which Aunt Emily hastened to smother.

"But are we women always to be governed and never to govern?" she expostulated; "now if we had the vote."

"Vote, yes," interrupted Miss White, briskly, "with the result that we might have women for county, state, and national officials; we might have women for governors of the States; a woman for president of the United States; why not? there are as many women as men!"

There was dead silence in the Judge's dining room. The little woman in gray had given the club food for reflection.

"A woman for president; surrounded by a cabinet of women; and no army or navy," she argued plausibly.

"Then where would the men be?" inquired Aunt Emily, scornfully.

"Oh! sulking at home, and letting the women run things, as they do now, entirely too much, according to my ideas," retorted Miss White.

And from that time forward Aunt Emily regarded her as of no account to the sisterhood of suffragettes.

"There is one thing," said Mrs. Burleigh, as she pulled a very much folded and creased postal card from the chaotic contents of a diminutive leather bag, "one thing that I don't understand; and that is, who had the audacity to send me this card. Listen:

> *"You will report, ready to serve luncheon, at Dorcas Hall on Monday next, at noon."*

"Oh!" exclaimed Anne, "I—" She stopped suddenly, as she felt Aunt Emily vigorously kicking her under the table.

Mrs. Burleigh looked at her over the postal. "I beg pardon?"

"Oh, I was only going to say"—Aunt

Emily tramped on her foot; she winced, but told the truth—" that I received one, too."

" So did I," said Miss White, Miss Keen, and the five Blackwell girls.

" Dorcas Hall, indeed," said Mrs. Burleigh, contemptuously; " this is my reply to that crazy organization;" so saying she tore the offending card into small bits and crushing them in her large, fat hand, she dropped them in a little pile on the table.

" Mine, too," said Miss White as she added her mite to the pile.

" And ours," said the oldest Miss Blackwell, as she gathered the torn postals from her four sisters—they always did the same thing—and laid them on the table.

But Miss Keen kept hers intact. " There may be something in it for poor women," she remarked hopefully; and Aunt Emily knew that she had secured another recruit for the Cause.

IX

VOTES FOR WOMEN

Now Harold lifted up his eyes—we left him sitting on the top rail of the wheat-field fence—and behold, he saw daddy, who was the father of Anne, busily engaged in pulling up a flourishing growth of wild mustard weeds, that had all sprung from the one little yellow flower in the border of the oats. And for every weed that daddy pulled up by the roots two weeds seemed to take its place, which is peculiar to the wild mustard.

The sun was rising high in the heavens, and the temperature with it, so that daddy was not in that calm and equable state of mind and body that philosophy teaches us is the one most conducive to health and happiness. In fact, owing to the heat and the wild mustard, and Aunt Emily's activity, daddy was in a feverish state of intense irritability, and in no mood whatever

to receive with patience the words of wisdom that came from Harold:

"Mr. Forest," he began, very seriously, "if I were you I would do something about Anne."

Daddy straightened up his long back suddenly:

"Eh! what's that? What's the matter with Anne?" His blue eyes were dark and bright as they glanced with a fixed look squarely into Harold's eyes. Daddy's glance was so disconcerting, anyway; he just looked squarely into one's eyes, and through the eyes into one's brain; there was no evading those intellectual search-lights.

In the look of his eyes there was such a deep sincerity, such a wonderful understanding and sympathy with all human kind—even with the mysteries of vegetation and the outward signs of Nature—that no one dared to even think a lie while daddy's eyes were upon him.

And, as Maeterlinck warns us: "Is it thor-

oughly clear to you—this is one of the strangest, most disquieting of truths—is it thoroughly clear to you that, if there be evil in your heart, your mere presence will probably proclaim it to-day a hundred times more clearly than would have been the case two or three centuries ago? . . . Though you assume the face of a saint, a hero or a martyr, the eye of the passing child will not greet you with the same unapproachable smile if there lurk within you an evil thought, an injustice, or a brother's tears."

When daddy looked into Harold's eyes he saw in their honest depths no treachery, no evil, but only the illuminating flash that lighted the very depths of the young man's being; showing that which had come to him, with a certitude—when Anne had left him that very morning.

"Oh," he said softly; "has the child been worrying you?"

"Mr. Forest," said Harold, solemnly, "Anne is a woman."

"Oh, is she?" said daddy, in a surprised tone of voice.

"Then you and I need not worry; a woman can take care of herself."

"But you should do something," persisted the young man.

"Do what?"

"Well, put your foot down on this suffragette business."

Daddy unconsciously looked down at his feet, and then up again into Harold's troubled face; but said nothing.

"You're her father, you know," he continued.

Daddy recalled various little traits, in that young woman's make-up, that closely resembled some of his own. "Yes, I am her father," he sighed.

"Well, you have the right—the legal right," he advised professionally—"until she becomes of age."

"There is no way, Harold," said daddy, con-

clusively; "no way to make Anne do anything that she doesn't want to do." . . .

And then a much soiled and unkempt-looking individual suddenly appeared from behind the hedge-row of trees. He was foot-sore and weary, hungry and dirty; a genuine down-and-out.

Daddy hailed him at first sight. "Heigh, there! my man," he called; "what do you want?"

The fellow blinked in the bright sunlight.

"Nothin'," he muttered, crossly.

"Poor chap," said daddy, full of compassion for "the least of these my brethren," "poor chap; I'll have a talk with him. Heigh!" he called again, "come here."

The man looked uneasily to the right and the left, as though looking for some avenue of escape, and then limped slowly across the few hundred feet that separated them. He was a short, thick-set, burly-looking man of about forty; his cheeks were bronzed with exposure

to the weather, and were bristling with a stubby red beard.

"Who are you looking for?" inquired daddy, cordially.

"Nobody," replied the man, doggedly. His foxy little eyes were furtively examining the others' faces, in the effort to get his bearings.

"Where are you going?" asked daddy, persuasively; and there was so much of benevolence in his voice and manner that the stranger took courage, and he began a recital of his woes:

"Honest to God," he almost whined, "it ain't my fault, so it ain't. I'm a mechanic, I am, and a good one, too, if I say it myself."

"Where were you working?" asked daddy, compassionately.

"In Paterson; I'm one of them strikers," he said, defiantly. "A weaver, I am, and a good one, too, if I say it myself." He sat down on the grass along the edge of the fence; and, removing his battered hat, assumed an air of martyrdom.

"Why did you strike?" inquired daddy, curiously.

"Women," laconically.

"Women?" repeated daddy; "what had women to do with it?"

"Well, the Boss—he got up a machine—a loom—that women could work; and along come the women, lots of 'em, and works the looms, for less wages than us men would work for; and so we struck work; there wasn't barely a living in it before the women came along with their cheap labor; and now it's just slow starvation, that's what it is, if I say it myself."

He shook his head, mournfully, and pulled a spear of wire grass back and forth between his teeth.

Daddy's eyes were roving over his oats field, full of pretty little yellow-flowered weeds, called wild mustard.

"I'll tell you what you can do," he said, encouragingly, as he took his bare, sun-burnt arms from the top fence rail; "I'll tell you

what you can do," his voice was full of energy and enthusiasm, " you can help me pull those—those——"

" Damn," insinuated Harold.

" Damn; yes, damn," he was out in the open, poor daddy and then he was so intensely human; " those damnable weeds!" He waved a comprehensive hand over a broad field of mingled green and yellow; a setting of wild mustard, the sight of which was enough to make a saint swear!

The fellow took one look at the promised job, and nearly collapsed. " Thanks, Boss, just the same as if I took you up; but I'm on my way West, where there ain't so many women; you see, I'm a mechanic, and a good one, too, if I say it myself. So long."

He shuffled over the fence, and ambled along the road toward Mylo.

" Women—women," said daddy reflectively, " overworked and underpaid; women trying to get men's jobs, and clamoring for men's wages

for inferior work; women neglecting and forgetting altogether their primary duty of bearing children." He leaned over the fence and looked after the retreating figure with great commiseration.

"Here's your young friend coming now," he laughed, as he recognized the old white horse, Charlie, and the yellow run-about; with Aunt Emily and Anne, returning from the meeting. "I didn't think it was so late."

Then he looked down the road, in the other direction, and his ruddy face paled to an ashy white.

"Merciful Jupiter!" he exclaimed; "that horse will break their necks!"

Then he gathered his long legs together, and, clearing the fence in a springing high jump, he ran at top speed up the road with the long swinging trot of an Indian.

Harold's quick eye, following daddy's down the road, saw the same thing:

An automobile, long, low, and rakish; a

devilish thing painted red and emitting noxious fumes from superheated machinery; an infernally dangerous thing, in the hands of a drunken driver; a mad, monstrous thing of death and destruction, wildly careening and zigzaging across the narrow road; an almost certain destroyer of the white horse, Charlie, the yellow run-about, and its two women occupants, who were coming toward it; coming toward it but could not see it, because they were slowly climbing one side of an incline, while the red devil was chasing up the other side.

From his vantage point, at the top of the hill, Harold could see in both directions.

A yellow streamer, on which was inscribed the modern slogan: "Votes for Women," whipped and snapped with the rush of the car, as it sped on its erratic course. The single occupant of the rattling, noisy machine was either a lunatic, or he was drunk. Harold had no time to decide the point; he must be stopped, crushed, annihilated instanter.

For this purpose he grasped his trusty spear —like Sir Launcelot, who killed the fiendly dragon that spit fire out of his mouth—and, holding it well balanced in both hands, he launched it, fair and square, against the mechanical monster, aiming for its left eye, or, to be more exact, for its near fore wheel, which it struck between the spokes! Now, Harold's spear was nothing more or less than a sound chestnut fence rail, but it did the work thoroughly. There was a burring crash, and an overpowering smell of gasoline, as the car stood on its head, and, turning a complete somersault, threw its hilarious occupant some ten yards over the fence, where he landed in a most undignified tangle of arms and legs.

Harold, having unhorsed or unwheeled his opponent, ran to his assistance, like a true knight, and found a very much dazed and badly scared man; who, still holding the broken stem of his pipe firmly between his teeth, sat up and feebly inquired: " Where is my pipe? "

He was a very remarkable-looking individual, who might have been thirty, or who might have been fifty years of age; his head was pear-shaped, coming to a narrow, dome-like top that was completely bald.

His face was sallow and wrinkled; and his complexion was like the furrowed and shrunken side of a rotten apple; his eyes were of a pale blue, the whites of which showed unpleasantly and distinctly in contrast to his dark skin. He was loosely put together, and seemed to be all bones and no muscle. Altogether, he was such an unhealthy-looking specimen that Harold felt very much like taking another fence rail and bringing it down on top of his bald pate, which would have put an end to Mr. Towne's vicarious existence; and have saved Aunt Emily a great deal of trouble.

Harold felt like it, his anger, indignation, really his alarm for Anne's safety, not having altogether subsided; but he did nothing of the kind; for, instead of destroying the ugly

stranger, he turned him over gently, looking for possible injuries, straightening his thin legs and arms and testing his joints; but, finding nothing amiss, he left him there, and hastened to the ladies' assistance.

He found them busily engaged in gathering up wildly-scattered leaves of suffragette literature. Aunt Emily had taken possession of the yellow streamer and was folding it up carefully into a neat little roll:

"Why, it must be the Committee, the Gospel Car; but where are they?"

She looked around and saw a leathery-looking face turned towards her; a wrinkled, warped-looking face, in which were two pale blue eyes gazing upon her in terrified astonishment.

Then Aunt Emily did a truly feminine action; she collapsed, fell in a quiet little heap beside the wrecked Gospel Car.

The fellow was certainly a most horrible spectacle. His countenance, none too pleasing

under the most advantageous circumstances, was rendered doubly shocking by his recent adventure. His shapeless face was seamed and blotched with streaks of mud, intermingled with blood and perspiration; as was also his bald head. Added to this, his boorish, gawky, uncouth figure, clinging desperately to the fence, in order to maintain an upright position, and Aunt Emily's collapse is partly explained, partly accounted for, but not altogether; for the sight of this man had suddenly awakened in her breast the most intense emotion, the most violent excitement, under the influence of which she was completely prostrated.

With the instinct of her sex Anne dropped to the ground beside her, protectingly covering her aunt's weakness by word and deed. She brooded over her and soothed her, while Harold stood by utterly wretched. He was close to Anne, but something in her manner warned him that he was really at a great distance from her. He felt that he and she were acting a sort

of by-play in dumb show, while the main action was proceeding with confusing rapidity. Somehow, as he glanced at the pitiable figure behind the bars, he felt no great pride in his achievement, by which he had subdued his dangerous hilarity; but his pity was short-lived, and indignation, mingled with anger, grew upon him when Anne spoke:

"I saw it all," she said, disdainfully; "it was most contemptible. Women have just as much right to the road as men; you acted like a perfect brute, like a—a—" Then Anne also indulged in her most womanly attribute, and silently wept over the reviving form of poor Aunt Emily.

X

A SUFFRAGIST

It was Sunday; and it brought quiet and comparative peace to the Forest family, now increased by an additional member, in the badly-battered shape of Mr. Sidney Towne, erst suffragist, and an ardent supporter of the cause of woman's rights—for what it would pay him. He had tried everything else in the course of his peregrinations through various countries, and nothing in the way of a living seemed so easy, so well suited to his erratic nature, as the free and easy, law defying crusade of the Everlastingly Discontented, until his evil star led him to " The Birches " and into the arms of Aunt Emily! Old Charlie, the immediate cause of his plight, with the assistance of the neighbor's horses, and yards of log chains, had succeeded in dragging his Gospel Car to the nearest blacksmith shop; and so had terminated, for the time being, the woman's

propagandism of revolution, discomfort, and disagreeableness on earth, ill will toward men.

Daddy, with his wife and daughter, had driven over to Mylo, to attend services in the pretty little ivy-clad Episcopal church that stands with its back to the Main Street; and Aunt Emily, sitting bolt upright beside the bed, on which Mr. Towne lay squirming, has him at her mercy.

"You needn't look at me that way, Emily," he muttered, between the folds of his enveloping bandages; "you might remember that I am an invalid, all broken up, all——"

"I'm not looking at you, Sidney. Goodness knows I never wanted to set eyes on you again," she observed, with a placidity of manner, an utter vacuity of expression, that sounded in his throbbing ears like the hollow, meaningless sound of slowly-dripping water in a rain spout.

He laboriously turned over on his other side. "It wasn't my fault; you can bet on that," he groaned.

"Or mine, either," retorted Aunt Emily, grimly.

There was a long silence, interrupted only by Abe, who was singing in the orchard under their window:

> "A band of Angels, comin' after me,
> Comin' for to carry me home."

Aunt Emily when talking was bad enough; but Aunt Emily when she was suffering with an attack of observing silence was misery.

He raised himself on one elbow and looked longingly out of the open window, wishing that he had wings, so that he could fly to the uttermost parts of the earth.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" he asked, in desperation.

"About what?" she inquired, indifferently.

"Oh come, Emily," he said crossly, as he fell back hopelessly on the pillows; "that's no way for a wife to——"

She interrupted him sharply:

"Sidney Towne, don't be a fool."

Then she fell to thinking, thinking of the days when she had pursued this man with the cunning of her sex—the worst of her sex. This man, the outlines of whose crooked, shapeless form were sharply visible under the light counterpane. This man with his ugly, mottled face, swathed in bandages; his whining voice appealing to her with a tiresome, irritating monotony. This creature whom she had loved; who had caressed her, who had kissed her, and called her his wife—bah!

She sprang suddenly from her chair, and moved restlessly around the room, her hands doubled, so that her nails sank deeply into her thin palms.

"Oh! you fool," she said angrily; "you idiot, what Devil brought you here?"

"The Cause, Emily," he replied with exasperating slowness; "the glorious Cause of Women's Rights."

Somehow Aunt Emily's anger and furious

indignation revived him; he surveyed her calmly with his pale-blue eyes and weighed her desperation in the mental balance of his mind—he was calculating his chances, and what they were worth.

She sat down and hid her face in her long bony hands.

"Of course you are lying," she mumbled between her fingers; then she dropped her hands on her lap:

"Well! what do you want?" she added.

He closed his eyes.

"Nice place, this," he suggested, dreamily; "old man pretty well heeled, eh! Emily, who owns it?"

"Cousin John," she replied, mechanically.

Mr. Towne was apparently lost in contemplating a particularly bright flower in the design of the wall paper; mentally he was carefully considering his next move; occasionally he would search the face of his wife, covertly, silently.

"Well?" inquired Aunt Emily, who was conscious of his stolen glances. "Well, how much do you want?"

"Emily, dear," he began.

"Emily, dear!" she repeated, scornfully; "don't Emily, dear, me. What do you want?"

"Only to be near you, dearest. You remember the old——"

Aunt Emily interrupted him contemptuously:

"Don't waste your breath or tax your memory, Sidney, with the past. Just how much will I have to pay you to quit pretending that you can't get up and leave this house at once?"

He went on quite unrebuked. "After all these years of sorrow and loneliness, to find my dear Emily so cruel, so unforgiving, so——"

"I said, how much?" she again interrupted.

He dropped his whining tone, and slipping his lean legs out from under the covers, sat on the side of the bed, while his cold little eyes went over her, carefully, deliberately.

"I don't know just how the world has used you, my precious life-mate that was," he sneered; "but whatever cruel fortune has given you, I am willing to go halves on it; and that's only right and legal."

He disregarded her disdainful expression and went on: "Not that it will settle matters, by any means; I have a little account against that young cock of the walk who assaulted me on the highway, demolished my car."

"Your car?"

"Well, the Committee's car; what's the difference? They're my legs, anyway," he growled as he extended one crooked limb to his wife's angry view; "all sprained and broken, and my ribs and head all stove in and mashed up. They're all mine, anyway, and he's got to pay for them."

"You were drunk," she said contemptuously; "drunk and disorderly, and you can thank your stars if you get off without being arrested. Mr. Lukens is a lawyer, and he said

he was going to get a warrant for you as soon as you were well enough to leave here."

Mr. Towne jumped out of bed and, in spite of his various injuries, began hastily to dress himself.

His wife watched him with renewed interest.

"Say, Emily," he whined, his bravado all gone, all vanished into thin air; "you wouldn't peach on a fellow?"

"Wouldn't what?" She was sitting bolt upright in her chair, her expression absolutely vacant, her manner listless and indifferent.

"You wouldn't give me away if I should just cop a few little necessary articles laying around loose, and get away before the family comes back?"

Aunt Emily's pale face flushed with shame and indignation; then, as if moved by some noble impulse, she crossed the room to the open window under which Abe was crooning his religious ditties.

"If you steal a pin from this house, Sidney Towne," she said, flaming with wrath, "I'll call 'murder and thief,' and Abe is pretty husky."

Mr. Towne was unwrapping his ugly visage most expeditiously.

"Who's going to steal?" he denied briskly; "of all the infernal contrary cats, my Emily is the——"

She stood calmly at the window, her hands on the sill, her neck outstretched, apparently on the verge of calling "Abe."

Then she turned her head toward her husband; she was quick to note his terror, his evident desire to get away from the place as soon as possible. She felt an inward thrill—a righteous one, perhaps; for had she not protected her host from pillage—of satisfaction of mastery over the being she detested.

"Get out of here, Sidney," she commanded; "you have quite an hour to catch a train for Philadelphia, and the folks will be back most any time now."

He turned the knob of the door.

"Good-by, Emily," he said, tenderly; "good-by, my precious."

"Poof!" Her eyes were almost brilliant, almost expressive.

"Remember," she said, with judicial calmness, "there will be a warrant out for you; so don't come here again."

Mr. Towne faded quietly through the door, down the old stairway to the hall. There he helped himself to a hat and coat belonging to daddy, picked up a few things that would fit in the pockets, and disappeared across the fields, keeping the house between him and Abe.

XI

A LOVERS' QUARREL

AND in the shadow of the great chestnut tree, the silvery radiance of the placid moon all about him, Harold Lukens sat smoking his pipe; and trying his best to reconcile the way of a maid with the usual processes of logical reasoning.

The old chestnut tree was the identical one that had grown on the "campus" of the "Birches" for nearly a century, and which had attained, by natural progress, its present magnificent proportions. He had sulked at home all of that beautiful Sabbath day, brooding over the unexpected treatment that he had received from Anne, in return for his heroic efforts in upsetting the bibulous Mr. Towne, and in saving her life.

As many as a dozen times during the day he had firmly resolved to intrude no more in

Anne's personal affairs; and, as often, he had revoked his decision, and as firmly concluded that nothing in this world was worth while, unless it included all of her personal affairs, and everything else that concerned her in any way. So it was not surprising to find him, at the close of day, and just at the rising of a glorious full moon, slowly and thoughtfully wending his way across the fields, and over the fence that separated the "Lukens Farm" from the "Birches."

Arriving at the outskirts of his earthly Paradise, or, to be more prosaic, arriving at the barn, he found Abe sitting on the trunk of an ancient and recumbent pear tree, singing softly to himself, and gazing at the moon. The whites of the negro's eyes glistened with a religious fervor, as his voice breathed softly:

"A band of Angels comin' after me——"

Then he suddenly stopped as Harold appeared around a corner.

"Evenin' Mister Harold."

"Good-evening Abe—everything all right in—in the house?"

He nodded his head toward the low stone dwelling; but while his question would naturally seem to include all of its inmates and other contents, Abe understood perfectly, and answered:

"She done gone for a walk, Mister Harold."

The young man, with all the nervous apprehension that usually attends a youth in his condition, raised his watch to the broad face of the moon. It was barely eight o'clock.

"Late for Miss Anne to be walking alone," he said anxiously; and then: "is she alone, Abe?"

"Yes, Mister Harold, she done gone alone;" and then, as if commiserating the other's concern, he added: "Miss Anne ain't gone very far; jest around the big chestnut."

Then, Harold's solicitude changing suddenly to apprehension, he inquired about certain other

persons; and learned that the stranger who had suffered so severely at his hands on the previous Friday, had arisen from his bed of pain, and departed—with daddy's hat and coat, together with numerous small articles of virtu, from the hall mantlepiece! He also learned that Aunt Emily was confined to her room, " feelin' poorly," and that Mr. and Mrs. Forest had gone to church.

This was the condition of affairs when Harold sauntered toward the chestnut tree, in search of Anne; but, though he sought her round and round that particular tree, and around a great many others, extending his walk from the house to the wood, Anne was not to be found. She was not to be found, because she preferred to remain hidden; which was a very easy matter to do when one thinks of the great clump of lilac bushes, and other flowering shrubs, that stood between the trees. In fact she played a fine game of hide-and-seek with her lover, with the result that he threw

himself down at the foot of the old tree and tried his best to be patient and to await her return.

It was during this state of quietude, when, in harmony with his surroundings, he sat perfectly motionless, his ear detected a slight rustling, and then the crackling of a dry twig, suddenly broken by a light footstep.

He was in the shadow, and only the glow of his pipe could discover him.

Quietly covering it in his hand, he peered about him, and was rewarded by the unmistakable flutter of a white skirt; and then, as dainty a little "Ah-Choo!" as it was possible for a lady to sneeze!

Harold emptied his pipe and slipped it into his side pocket; then he arose, and turning, saw Anne standing just behind him.

For a full moment they looked at each other without a word, then she suddenly turned, stooped down and picked a vagrant daisy.

"I am so sorry," she said, timidly.

"Sorry! for what?" he asked, loftily.

"I mean for—for being so mean—so unjust yesterday—about that horrid man, you know."

"What became of him?" he asked, indifferently.

"Oh, I don't know—I don't care," she said impatiently; "the wretch made off with daddy's coat and hat. And Aunt Emily says she was to blame, and she's quite ill over it. Poor Aunt Emily."

She was slowly picking off the daisy petals, her head lowered, her eyes cast down.

"Anne!" said he, quickly, and held out his hands. But she drew away.

"Don't!" she said, impulsively. "I know what you are thinking, what you will say; you always treat me like a child, a sort of weaker, inferior—like a woman. No! Don't!"

"Because, Anne, you always seemed so—I feel so big and strong—so rough."

"And you are always laughing at me, be-

cause I want to be something—to do something, something more than—than—housework!"

It did not sound very convincing, even to her own ears; and, to add to the commonplace ending, she imagined that she could detect a smile lurking in the corners of his mouth.

But it was more than a smile, for suddenly he held her in his powerful arms, his eyes grown big and round.

"Stop—Harold! this minute; let me go," she cried.

He only held her tighter, his face bent low over her proud head and his breath mingling with the perfume of her hair.

"You must say now—if you—love me."

"Let me go at once!" she struggled, and stamped her foot in sudden anger. But Harold only held her the more closely, more tightly, her arms pinioned close to her sides, his face brushing her flaming cheek.

"Not until you tell me that you love me—

or something." He was willing to compromise.

"You're hurting me!" she said, angrily; but he only held her closer to his breast, and, pressing his lips to her hot, burning cheek, he kissed her again and again.

"Anne—my Anne!" he murmured; and his strong arms relaxed, so that she had no trouble to break free from his embrace.

"Anne!" he said, half mournfully, surprise and grief mingling in his voice. "Don't you love me—just a little?"

"No!" she raged. "I—hate you! detest you! Oh! you coward—to attack—a woman!"

Then she went away, with a haughty step, leaving him standing alone under the great shadowing tree.

XII

THE FINANCIAL ANGEL

GIVE a calf—and some women—rope enough, and they will hang themselves.

Daddy would often take Spot, the little white and black heifer, into the lush grass of the orchard; and, tying her with a long rope to one of the trees, would watch her slowly but surely wind herself up, as it seemed, around the tree. Spot always went in one direction, not having sense enough to reverse her course, with the invariable result that she was soon up against it; that is up against the tree, where she stood softly mooing a plaintive note, for daddy to come and set her free.

With Mrs. Bellmore the case was much the same. She was the only daughter of a widower, who had worked hard all his lifetime in the laborious occupation of shearing lambs. Many a flossy little ewe had passed through his hands, leaving their fleece in his treasury,

until he had accumulated a vast fortune.

Then he died, leaving a fine bequest to his church, and minute directions to the trustees to build a larger and finer edifice. His will also specified that a large brass tablet was to be placed beside the chancel, in full view of the congregation, whereon was to be an inscription to his memory, and the glory of God!

All the rest of his profits arising from lamb shearing—amounting to about twenty millions of dollars—was left absolutely to his daughter, to dispose of as she saw fit.

This money was the long rope that allowed the frisky young woman a wide latitude, which she enjoyed to the utmost limit. Then she married young Bellmore, a youth as rich as herself; and, to use the vernacular—which seems much more expressive than academic English—she couldn't make good, in domestic life, not having any more brains than Spot; and, like that little black and white heifer, she was soon up against it.

Her discontent manifested itself in loud bleatings against things in general, and men in particular; and her money and influence soon placed her near the head of the great army of the Everlastingly Discontented.

It was Mrs. Bellmore, or General Bellmore, as she was called in the public print, who was giving the luncheon at Dorcas Hall on Monday, the fifth of May; and it was she who, at Aunt Emily's suggestion, had written the peremptory postal card to Anne and the other members of the "Current Events Club."

Mrs. Bellmore, playing the part of Lady Bountiful, was always peremptory, but more particularly so when summoning the privates—the ordinary and commonplace—to fight for the Cause. Her invitations to join in any festive occasion—such as one might suppose a luncheon to be—were always in the form of a citation, an official summons to kow-tow before her rich but plebeian presence.

Anne was to assist in serving luncheon to

Mrs. Bellmore, the Honorable Vice-president of the International Woman's Political Equality and Suffrage Association, and an incongruous multitude of invited guests, together with Aunt Emily and Miss Keen, of the " Current Events Club," her latest recruit, who had enlisted for the Cause. The three women entered Dorcas Hall together a little before noon.

Anne has a secret, known only to Mrs. Bellmore and myself. Here is one of the advantages of being the friend of Anne Forest. I know her intimately, thoroughly, her thoughts, her aspirations, her love affairs—the beautiful, innocent young girl had but one, and that one, Harold; I know that positively—but I never know what she is going to do next! That is a curious fact. In my mind I have her future all carefully arranged, all provided for, when suddenly she takes matters in her own hands and starts off in an entirely different direction! Then, forsooth, I can follow on and keep in her

delightful company, urging her to go my way, to accept my views regarding her future, to be my protégé, to let me conduct her to a happy ending. But, I have had some experience with the young woman, and I know that when Anne makes up her mind to do a thing, especially when it is a matter of conscience, or not to do a thing, when she thinks it is wrong, then, "all hell and Brown's mules," as Abe would say, "couldn't move her!"

On the evening of the day when Harold Lukens had so unceremoniously upset Mr. Towne's automobile, Anne, burning with wrath and righteous indignation, had withdrawn to her own room at an early hour, and had there penned the following letter to Mrs. Bellmore. And Aunt Emily had nothing to do with it, excepting that she had, inadvertently, given Anne the Vice-president's name and address; in fact it was one of those actions, peculiar to my heroine, where she, metaphorically, took the

bit in her teeth and pulled everything her own way:

Dear Mrs. Bellmore:—

I shall report, ready to serve luncheon, at Dorcas Hall on Monday next—per your instructions. And, if you have anything more important for me to do—anything whereby I can prove that my courage and resolution and ability are, at least, equal to that of a man—please let me do it.

Very sincerely,

ANNE FOREST.

P. S.—I mean a young man—about 24.

This letter had been mailed the following day—Saturday—and then followed Sunday, with all its happenings; including the ignominious flight of Mr. Towne, Anne's repentance, and Harold's blundering way of trying to lead Anne, instead of following her!

Mrs. Bellmore read the letter with much satisfaction. Aunt Emily had frequently conversed with her concerning her niece, and had painted, in glowing colors, the charms of her person and character.

"If we could only get her interested in the

Cause," said this wise old worldling; " we need some pretty faces, to attract the men!"

And this is the dreadful part of this whole suffragette business, that these wide-eyed, sensible, thoughtful, conscientious young girls take the subject seriously—much more earnestly than do the wise, sapient, experienced old dames who know better.

Who know better than to suppose for an instant that God will reverse himself, and the work of his hands, to suit their passing and idle whims.

These pettish, peevish old women—conscious of the imputation that their order consists for the greater part of the disappointed and the discontented—rejoice more over one beautiful young girl who joins the Cause for conscience sake, than over the ninety and nine elderly and unattractive old women, who need no conscience!

Mrs. Bellmore's eyes went over Anne approvingly.

"Just the young person we want to lead our marching army," she confided to Aunt Emily; "the very one, young, pretty and enthusiastic. Have you any more recruits for the Cause?"

Aunt Emily then presented "Miss Keen, of Mylo, one of our most prominent educational leaders; one who, having charge of the young, could inculcate into their little brains the glorious doctrine of ill will toward men!"

Miss Keen made a sweeping curve with one foot, bent her venerable knees, and performed a courtesy, after the same vintage of '61 from which came the manners of Mylo. You could almost see her hoop-skirts making "a cheese" as she whirled them around and sat down suddenly!

Dear me! that was a long time ago; but I remember those hoop-skirts: so did Miss Keen.

Mrs. Bellmore looked over her new recruit indifferently.

"Yes; oh yes," she said, absently; "of course we want to get the children—to educate

them regarding their duties; to teach them independence; to instruct them in sexology so that they can guard themselves from wicked men—from——"

A sudden thought crossed her mind as she lowered her head and peered over her spectacles at Miss Keen.

"I mean your girl pupils," she cautioned.

"Yes, mam; we have both kinds in Mylo—girls and boys," replied the schoolmarm.

"But the boys can look out for themselves," commanded Mrs. Bellmore, in her most authoritative voice.

"Oh, yes, mam; the boys are no trouble at all; they just play around, and amuse themselves with one thing or another; but the girls—the girls!"

Miss Keen clasped her thin hands in front of her and assumed an attitude of hopeless endeavor.

Mrs. Bellmore frowned and looked troubled. She bent her shoulders forward and stooped

like Atlas carrying the world on his shoulders.

"A mighty problem, Miss Keen; a mighty problem—these poor girls of ours growing up to a life of dependent misery, to which there is no alternative but—marriage! Think of it, Miss Keen, think of it."

Miss Keen had thought of it, and longed for it during many years; but hope was dead within her loving bosom. Still she was willing to think of it once more, if Mrs. Bellmore so desired.

Aunt Emily also thought of it, and shrugged her shoulders.

Anne thought of it, and her face turned a rosy red that was like the blush of a ripe apple.

Then Mrs. Bellmore braced herself and stood erect. She wore a ridiculous-looking hat from the back of which a single feather protruded—like the tail of a rooster who had lost all feathers but one in a barn-yard fight—with a little tuft at the end. This tuft nodded and shook in harmony with her emotions as she glared through her spectacles, and issued her ultimatum:

"But we are going to solve this problem now —now! Miss Keen!"

The schoolmistress, tense with nervousness from thinking over the dreadful alternative of marriage, started violently as Mrs. Bellmore's clenched fist came down abruptly on the luncheon table over which she was presiding.

Some of the guests, who were sipping weak tea and nibbling small pieces of very thin slices of bread and butter, looked up languidly toward the head of the table, but gave no other sign of interest; they were accustomed to Mrs. Bellmore.

"And we're going to give the sleepy old town a sensation; we're going to wake them up, arouse them to a sense of their duty toward their women. We're going to make Philadelphia sit up and take notice of us."

Miss Keen timidly inquired how this awakening was to be accomplished.

"Oh, very easily," cried the other, exultantly. "To-morrow we are all going to turn out, every mother's son of us—I mean every mother's

daughter of us—right out into Broad Street and march—march—a great army of women; you know there are as many women as men."

Miss Keen nodded thoughtfully, and heaved a sigh. "Perhaps more."

"Exactly; perhaps more—and the more the better. It has all been arranged. We are going to march to Harrisburg, thousands, perhaps a million of us, and demand our rights; we are going to insist on immediate legislation; we are going to have laws passed enfranchising poor women; laws that will give them opportunity and the liberty for which God made them."

Anne's eyes glistened with a religious fervor as she gazed, mentally, into the future. She really felt a sort of imitation of the spirit that sent Jeanne d'Arc to the head of the French troops. Like the Maid of Orleans she saw a flash of light, and she believed that she heard an inner voice which enjoined her to fight for the glorious cause of Women.

The impression made on her sensitive mind

by the words of the older—and much more experienced—woman, gave a new direction to her thoughts, and she was trembling with excitement as she leaned forward eagerly, her dark eyes sparkling with enthusiasm. Oh! if she could only ride at the head of that noble army, with a sword and banner of yellow and gold!

Mrs. Bellmore's keen eyes caught the girl's wild enthusiasm and read her secret thoughts:

"I don't know any one more suitable to head this glorious army than you, Miss Forest."

"Me! oh, I really—" Anne stammered, but her eyes flashed and danced in her head. "Oh, Mrs. Bellmore, I really——"

"But you shall," said the other, firmly; and one would suppose from her majestic manner that she was queen of all the women of Pennsylvania; "but you shall be our general, and we will follow your lead." She nodded graciously to Aunt Emily and Miss Keen; and they in their turn agreed to follow Anne in their glorious march to Harrisburg.

XIII

A MILITANT

A DOOR opened near the lower end of the table, and, simultaneously, there was a loud chorus of treble voices, accompanied by the clapping of hands, as a tall, shapeless young woman with a sad countenance entered the room.

She might have been passably good looking, had she possessed even one distinctive feminine characteristic; but she had none. She was attired in a costume distinctly masculine. She wore a linen shirt waist, and her chest being flat, contributed to her success in wearing a vest and coat of gray mixed tweed. A man's linen collar, a black necktie, and a soft Fedora hat, without feathers or ornaments of any description, completed her visible male attire. Visible only, for her lower extremities being in shadow, and clothed in a garment perfectly plain, narrow and straight, looked as if they

might have been encased in trousers. As she drew near to the table one might suppose her to be a tall, lanky, bilious-looking young man; very badly dressed, and grossly impolite, inasmuch as she seemed to be a man who deliberately sat at a table with his hat on, in the presence of ladies!

This young woman was a recent importation from England, brought over the sea by Mrs. Bellmore, to instruct American women in the noble art of female vandalism. A dozen places were offered her at the table, and as she selected one and sat down, a bevy of women admirers surrounded her, all bursting into a buzzing confusion of tongues.

Mrs. Bellmore laid a fat jewelled hand on Anne's arm.

"That is General Murphy," she explained, impressively, "the terror of the British Government; and she has burned houses, blown up a church, and insulted the prime minister; a wonderfully brave woman, she defied the en-

tire London police to arrest her—to prevent her from coming here!"

Anne wondered why the English officials should have been so anxious to detain so dangerous a fire brand in their midst, but she made no comment. Her head was feverish with excitement, and her hands and feet were cold. Her thoughts were whirling and twisting in a mad riot; she felt that she was suffocating in a highly-charged atmosphere.

Mrs. Bellmore arose and rapped on the table for silence. The buzzing sound became less insistent. They all continued talking, but in subdued tones, as she began to speak:

"Man, the dictator, the self-styled superior of women, must be brought to his senses." There was an outburst of approval and much clapping of hands: "Women, long-suppressed, long-suffering women, are coming to their own. Victory is in sight; we have only to reach out our hands and grasp it. The battle against man and his tyrannical rule has been long and

arduous, but now the fight has been fought, the victory won! In this fight against oppression and slavery; this fight for the freedom of women, no one soldier in our glorious Cause has been so prominent, none have fought more valiantly, more courageously, more fiercely, than our brave sister, who, as our invited guest, now honors us with her presence.

"In the dark hours of the night, when you and I were safely abed in our comfortable homes, she it was who set fire to many historic old houses in that land of tyranny—England.

"It was she who, at the risk of—of—of—being arrested, cut telephone and telegraph wires, who poured acid into mail boxes, who smashed the show windows of the haughty tradesmen, and the office windows of that proud English Government—that man-made government—which for hundreds of years has held their women in the most abject slavery. Sisters, we welcome this daring heroine, General Eliza Murphy."

There was more wild clapping of hands, and an outburst of enthusiasm that kept the "General" standing in blissful publicity until finally it subsided and then ceased.

Then she began; her voice was low and carefully modulated almost to a conversational tone:

"My sisters," she began; "I thank God that I am of the superior sex; that I am a woman, for woman needs no apology—she speaks for herself!" She paused while her sisters applauded; then she continued: "In the earliest ages Greek women had a right to vote in the public assemblies; but the men soon robbed her of that privilege. From that day to the present time women have been struggling to regain the vote. We have more ways than one by which we can take a hand in the Government, however, even though our right to vote is denied us. Themistocles used to say: 'My little boy rules Athens; for he governs his mother, and his mother governs me!' Let these male

tyrants beware the fate decreed to them by the women of Lemnos who unanimously agreed to put all their male relations to death; and who actually put their plan into execution!

"As far back as the Middle Ages women preached in public, supported controversies, published and defended these, filled the chairs of philosophy and law, harangued the popes in Latin, wrote Greek, and read Hebrew. Nuns wrote poetry, women of rank became divines, and young girls publicly exhorted Christian princes to take up arms for the recovery of the holy sepulchre. Hypatia, daughter of Theon of Alexandria, exceeded her father in astronomy, and understood philosophy. She governed the Platonic school. People regarded her as an oracle, and judges consulted her in important cases. And so we can hark back to women in all ages, to the ancient Hebrew women of whom was Miriam sister of the high priest Aaron, herself a prophetess, and possessed of great influence. And there was also

Deborah, wife of Lapidoth, who was a judge in Israel. And Semiramis of Assyria; she who built the great city of Babylon in one year! by employing two millions of men. And there was Nitocris, wife of Nabonidus, who succeeded Evil-merodach, and who managed the affairs of state with wonderful judgment and sagacity, while her husband was drunk with wine, and who was famous for building the canals and bridges of Babylon. And, by-the-way, in these days, when a young girl is married she must lose her own name, and take that of her husband, but the ancient Lycians took their names from their mothers and not from their fathers; and the inheritance descended to daughters, while sons were excluded. What a masculine howl would go up, oh! my sisters, if the next generation of women voters should pass such a law!"

There was so much laughter and confusion, so many delighted exclamations of approval amongst her feminine audience, that the "Gen-

eral" was compelled to stop until they had exhausted their buzzing commendations.

Anne sat like a thirsty soul, drinking in all these wonderful facts in the world's history—of which, for some reason, her father had never informed her. Her strong young heart beat in unison with the stirring words of the militant leader, and her hot blood coursed more rapidly through her veins as she listened to the long roll of illustrious women.

"Artemisia," resumed the speaker, "Artemisia, queen of Caria, served with Xerxes in his expedition against Greece; she commanded her portion of the fleet in person and fought as bravely as the men. In memory of her distinguished bravery her statue was erected at Lacedæmon among those of the Persian generals. And there was Aspasia, wife of Pericles of Ionia, witty, eloquent, and beautiful. They say that she was shockingly depraved. Why?"

She paused and looked around the room, her

question suspended in mid-air. But no one answered.

"I'll tell you why—because she dared to throw off the rigorous restraints imposed on her sex. Because she dared to devote herself to graceful accomplishments, seductive manners, and agreeable learning. Because she did not wish to remain hidden and in seclusion. And so history repeats itself. The women of to-day who dress in clinging garments, and who decorate themselves with ornaments and beautiful things are accused of what?" Again she paused for a reply, but there was none forthcoming.

"Of trying to attract the men! Why not? Aspasia attracted Plato, who loved to discourse philosophy with her." She paused while a low murmur of disapproval could be distinguished mingling with the hand clapping.

"So, if the women of to-day can, by wearing clinging skirts, and otherwise displaying the charms with which Nature has adorned

them, attract such men as Plato, then I say let them dress as they please."

"They will anyway," said a determined and solid-looking woman of fifty or thereabout; and whose figure resembled a bag of wheat tied in the middle; "they will anyway," and she looked around the table defiantly, as though she was seeking an opportunity of asserting her rights.

But none giving her cause for argument, she went on asserting that nobody could prevent her from wearing hobble skirts, slit skirts, or no skirts at all, just as she pleased. To which declaration of independence many of the women in her immediate vicinity acquiesced; and a general conversation ensued, while General Murphy remained standing, and awaiting an opportunity of renewing her speech.

Having secured a little audience of her own, the bellicose fat woman became more contentious, and hotly asserted that she knew men who were absolutely incompetent to keep house;

in fact, knew less than nothing about cooking, washing dishes, sweeping, dusting, and nursing babies!

Here she met with a mild titter—a giggle, which threatened to develop into a laugh.

But she suppressed it with a rising inflection of her voice which issued menacingly from her large and determined mouth.

"Yes; I said nursing babies!" she repeated defiantly. "You never knew of a man who could nurse a baby, did you?"

By their silence they gave an unqualified negative, and the fat lady won.

"Well! that's what I said," she triumphed; "and, moreover, if a man can't keep house, or —or—do things that women can do, how can they run a government, which is only keeping house on a bigger scale?"

There followed a rippling chorus of approval, but in the midst of it rang out the angry voice of General Murphy, who protested that she could not go on with her speech, unless the au-

dience refrained from loud talking and other unseemly noises.

"Unseemly, indeed!" repeated the fat one, while her red face grew nearly purple; "unseemly. Well, at any rate I have never been in jail!" and she looked with scorn—and other unutterable things—at the speaker, as she rose, and, with a heavy and determined tread, left the room.

There was a faint sigh of relief, a feeling of alleviation, when the door closed on her bulky form.

"One can't make an omelette without breaking some eggs," resumed the speaker, dryly; "we're bound to hurt somebody's feelings, to break somebody's windows, before we get the vote; but we will get it all right.

"We are fighting the same fight against the English tyrants that you Americans fought in 1776. You fought against King George the Fourth, and we are fighting against King George the Fifth. You fought for the freedom

of a colony, we are fighting for the freedom of half the world's population—for the liberty of all women against the tyranny of men."

The General sat down amidst a wild hullabaloo of approving cries and hand clapping, in which Anne joined with the enthusiasm of a new recruit.

"There!" said Mrs. Bellmore, proudly, "that is what I call an epoch-making speech. To-morrow we shall be in all the papers; they sent for my photograph and also for one of the General's, to illustrate, you know, the horrid things. I told them that they must not use them; but those reporters never pay the slightest attention to our wishes."

She raised her head and gazed languidly down the room.

"Why, who can that be?"

A beautiful woman, comely, with a pink flush on her cheeks, and a feverish sparkle in her dark eyes; a straight-backed, well-booted, and well-gloved woman, garbed in a neat,

tailor-made, olive green street suit; an old-fashioned garnet breast-pin at her throat; a dark green hat with velvet trimming; a lovely woman, too, who, notwithstanding the tinge of gray in her dark hair, could make every man in a car fall over each other to give her a seat; an imperious woman, with a large mouth, and a dimple in her left cheek; a woman past forty years of age was standing in the speaker's place, and, in a wonderfully melodious voice, was demanding recognition from the presiding officer.

XIV

AN ANTI-SUFFRAGETTE

"I DON'T know her at all," said Mrs. Bellmore, doubtfully, "and we must not take any chances with our speakers. She might be an Anti, you know."

Anne's eyes were riveted on the handsome woman, standing bravely alone, amongst the crowd of strangers, for an instant only; then she arose quickly, her cheeks suddenly flushing with happiness and pride. "Why, it's mother!"

Mrs. Bellmore laid a restraining hand on the young girl's arm. "Ah! indeed; one moment, please, Miss Forest; we will hear what she has to say."

With a smile on her half-parted lips, her dark eyes sparkling with intelligence; her whole pose one of confident, reliant, self-contained womanhood, the "little manager" began her speech. And, be it said, to the credit of her

courage, that this was the first and only speech that she had ever attempted. What induced her to attempt it was, simply, her obstinate sense of right; the same determination of will power that always impelled her along the path of duty, and over every obstacle that was in her way; the same high-minded sense of verity, of reality, of justice, which she had imparted to Anne at her birth.

"I am not in favor," she began in a quiet, distinct voice, "of any movement that has for its object the degradation of woman."

The buzzing noises ceased amongst the guests seated around the table; but there was a rustling sound, as those standing around the room tip-toed nearer the speaker. There was a commanding beauty about the matured woman, a certain superiority, always manifest in those who are in earnest, in the manner of her speech, in her almost careless, or, it may be said, in her apparent indifference to her audience, that claimed their attention at once.

She delivered her message gladly, with enthusiasm; but her interest lay in the message, and not in the audience. If they were not able to receive the truth, then so much the worse for the audience.

"I am not convinced that the few great women on thrones and those commanding armies, of whom we read in history, were of any benefit to our sex; on the contrary I think that they were usually a disgrace.

"What did they do for the benefit of their sisters—for other women? Nothing, absolutely nothing; for we read that in those days those other women were following along with the dogs, behind the tent poles, and sharing with the dogs both food and kicks! Wretched creatures, half starved, and drudging like animals, and like animals they were bought and sold!"

There was absolute silence in the audience as the curved lips of the speaker closed firmly above her determined chin. They felt that

whatever the truth might be, in this feminine controversy, Mrs. Forest, for one, would not dodge the question.

"We all know how these famous women came to power and prominence. Any school girl can tell us of Aspasia; how she caused the separation of Pericles from his wife; how she lived openly with him afterwards, and attracted, by her sex and beauty, to her house many of the learned and distinguished men of Athens, who taught her politics.

"Is this the kind of prominence that we wish for our daughters?"

She turned around and smiled cheerfully, almost encouragingly, as she addressed General Murphy.

"When those women of the ancients lost the right to vote, they parted with a thing that degraded them; and, from that day until the present time, women have persistently and uniformly advanced to the proud position that they occupy to-day.

"Let us not turn backward." There was a murmur of approval from some of the women present; but none gave her any applause, as she waited for a few moments to consider her words. Then they issued from her sweet lips in a brilliant burst of eloquence:

"I believe in a womanhood that is not militant, the womanhood of Mary and Martha—a loving womanhood that bears all things, feels all things; a womanhood that forgives and conquers. From that day, even until the present time, woman has been not only a companion but an inspiration to man. She has changed the brute of ancient times—the beast who beat his wife, and who sold her like an animal—into the man of to-day.

"How was she able to do this?"

She stopped; and, with a characteristic inclination of her head toward her right shoulder, she "beamed" (as daddy used to say), her mouth open, her lips apart, smiling radiantly.

"Through her love and devotion, because

she loved man instead of hated him. And that is why he has placed her in the high and proud position that she now holds."

She faced the head of the table where sat Mrs. Bellmore and Anne.

"Let us do nothing that will drag us down from that lofty position." Her eyes met those of her daughter in mute appeal, while she concluded:

"Let us give, and not demand; let us love, and not hate; let us be unselfish, generous, forgiving—let us be women."

She sat down, in an embarrassing silence. The women next to her turned their backs, and engaged each other in conversation—other than that under discussion.

General Murphy was furious. She arose to her feet, and without asking or receiving permission from any one, she began:

"I 'aven't the 'igh 'onor of knowing the lady who 'as just spoken;" then her vulgar Cockneyism burst forth in a turgid stream of wrath,

and bitter invective, against man in general, and Englishmen in particular; she had forgotten her carefully-prepared and rehearsed speech and suddenly revealed her origin and education.

Mrs. Bellmore promptly applied the gag. "The meeting is adjourned," she decided, although no motion had been made; "and I hope to see as many of you as possible when we assemble to-morrow at noon for our march to Harrisburg."

Then she took Anne by the arm, with great familiarity; and, as the French say, with empressement, sought Mrs. Forest. "I am so anxious to meet your mother," she murmured, as though from the fulness of her heart she could not wait another moment. "I liked her little talk, about home and mother, so much. Oh! here she is."

They were remarkably contrasted. The large, unctuous, bland woman, with her constant sham fervor of expression, her unfailing

suavity; and the clean-cut, seemly, graceful woman, with quiet, incisive speech, and calm, unruffled manners.

"I was saying to your daughter, Mrs. Forest"—and, while she was speaking, her eyes were roving around the room; while her ears were strained to catch every passing conversation—"that I enjoyed your little talk so much. It was so—so—simple, so homey, don't you know."

"I had no idea of speaking," asserted the little manager, flushing with confusion, now that it was all over; "but that Englishwoman said so many things that were not——"

"Yes; yes, indeed," interrupted Mrs. Bellmore, with her deepest and most enveloping voice; "but your daughter and Mrs. Towne have promised to dine with me this evening, and you must come, too; remember I won't take any excuse;" then she sailed away, into the sea of femininity, like a three-masted, full-rigged ship.

XV

WAR PREPARATIONS

For daddy had said to her, "Follow our daughter to this meeting of the suffragettes, and perhaps you may be able to do or to say something that will save the child from bitterness and certain disappointment." So Mrs. Forest had taken the next train for Philadelphia, arriving at Dorcas Hall just in time to hear and answer General Murphy's speech.

Now she had a few minutes alone with Anne, and she improved the occasion in the most tactful way.

"I have packed a small bag," she said quietly, "and left it for you at the station; here is the cheque."

Anne flushed in some confusion. "Oh, mother, I have plenty with me; Aunt Emily packed some things for me, and I really don't need much for——"

"A pair of good stout shoes, and some ser-

viceable garments, a raincoat. I hope you won't be too much exposed," she half sighed; "it's a dreadfully long tramp."

"Then you know," began Anne, quaking inwardly.

Her mother made an impatient little gesture. "Know! Well, I should think that every one who can read would know by this time; there seems to be nothing else in the newspapers, and one gets tired of reading about it."

"About what?" asked Anne, innocently.

"About this march of the women to Harrisburg to-morrow; I knew that your Aunt Emily was going with them, and I felt reasonably sure that you would go with your Aunt."

"Well, mother," began Anne, desperately. Somehow her little, clear-sighted mother looked so real, so genuine, at the moment; while all this fuss and discontent, this worry and excitement, appeared to be so fictitious, so unreal, so false in every way, that her resolution nearly failed her. For the moment she longed to go

back to the farm, to her cheery little room, with its sunny window overlooking the orchard, the orchard with the tree tops covered with fragrant blossoms, the orchard with its soft velvety carpet of blue violets.

She hesitated a moment and wanted to ask the question, "Does Harold know?" but her lips became dry, and the words died in her throat, her face grew tense and white; she must show him that she was able to do something, to be somebody—and yet—what difference would it make; why should she consult his feelings in the matter at all? There was her mother to consider, and daddy, poor daddy. She was about to slip her arm through her mother's and leave the hall, and that would have ended this veracious tale! How trifling are the things that change our destinies.

Mrs. Bellmore's roving eyes had accidentally caught Anne's troubled expression, and instantly she divined the cause and moved to her side. She was expansive and effusive, and the

words rolled from her full lips in a constant stream of meaningless chatter. She talked and talked, and then talked some more—about nothing at all.

She was like an old shotgun that scatters in every direction and occasionally wings a bird —and one tiny shot had hit Anne, had stung her to renewed activity, had irritated her so that she instantly forgot her irresolution and determined, more strongly than before, to try her wings. And this is what caused my remark on the utter insignificance of things that frequently turn aside the whole current of our lives. In the hodge-podge of Mrs. Bellmore's conversation she remarked, "I was just talking to a friend of mine, who knows a friend of yours, a Mr. Lukens." She stopped to enjoy the deep blush that mingled, so charmingly, with the healthy sun-burn on Anne's face. "A fine young man, he informed me, but a shocking Anti—dear me! I hope he won't coax you away from the Cause."

Anne's color mounted still higher; she laughed, just a trifle too loud for sincerity. "No danger, Mrs. Bellmore, I assure you, from that direction."

Then Aunt Emily, who had been hovering around them, joined the circle.

"Good," said Mrs. Bellmore, her deep, rich voice issuing, blandly, from the depths of her double chin; "now we will take my car and go home to dinner."

Mrs. Forest was buttoning her gloves. "You must excuse me," she said, quietly, and was gone! Which was the way of that remarkable woman on every occasion, be it great or small —she wasted no time or words.

Behind massive iron-grilled doors and double windows, draped in heavy folds of inner soft silk, and outward curtains of costly tapestry, Anne sat, in the seclusion of her room, thinking over the day's work.

It was the hour before dinner, when Society yawns, rubs its eyes and awakens to the labori-

ous task of arraying the poor human form—after all, as Carlyle commented: "A forked radish, with a head fantastically carved"—with gorgeous raiment and fine linen.

A gentle knock at her door announced a little French maid, who stood on the threshold, holding a travelling bag—a bulky, serviceable, but nevertheless a shapeless and very commonplace bag. It had not a single label pasted on its wrinkled sides—those scratched and stained souvenirs of foreign travel that so delight the heart of Society—no, not the heart, for Society has no heart; say, rather, the light head of Society; the head that stands up straight and erect like a spear of wheat—with nothing in it!

The bag belonged to daddy, and had served him well on various occasions, to carry home his plunder from many ravished second-hand book stores.

Anne recognized the article instantly as an old but much despised acquaintance that was

always in the way when there was need of cleaning up the storeroom at the " Birches."

The little maid carried the heavy, ungainly bag with much apparent difficulty to a low taboret of Persian origin that stood near a window; then she began to unbuckle the heavy straps.

" Pardon—the key, mademoiselle? " Anne made a pretense of searching in her hand-bag for a mythical key—a key to daddy's old valise! One might as well have searched for a needle in a haystack, or for a Bible in Mrs. Bellmore's library. There was such a thing in existence some place; but its whereabouts had remained so carefully concealed, and for so long a time, that it had been forgotten long ago.

" I can open it," said Anne assuringly.

Mathilde, the maid, looked in polite astonishment while Anne opened the old bag with a much-practised and therefore expert jerk.

The contents, like the valise, were more adapted for use than for ornament:

Item—

1. A pair of well-worn, heavy-soled, high-laced boots.
2. A much-frayed raincoat, minus several buttons.
3. Several pairs of good, strong——

Anne closed the bag with a snap.

"Thanks, Mathilde," she said to the maid, firmly; "but please tell Mrs. Bellmore that I will not come down to dinner this evening."

"Nonsense," came a voice from an adjoining room; the voice of Aunt Emily, that preceded her as she stepped, with a velvety tread, into Anne's room. "Wait, Mathilde, a moment. No, go, and we will ring for you."

The little maid opened the door and stole softly from the room.

When they were alone Anne pointed to the bag ruefully.

"I haven't a thing to wear." Aunt Emily looked at the tall young girl, neatly garbed in a plain, well-fitting suit of dark brown cloth;

its only trimming, a curious foreign collar and cuffs of many colors, interwoven with delicate threads of gold, the net result of many hours of toil, of secret consultations, and of little economies practised by Anne and her mother.

Then Aunt Emily's eyes rested on the beautiful oval face, with its rich framing of dark hair; on the deep, healthy tinge of red in her soft cheeks; on her eyes, which were sometimes gray, and sometimes almost black, and nodded her approval.

"You will do, my dear—just as you are."

XVI

MRS. BELLMORE'S DINNER

THE atmosphere in Mrs. Bellmore's house was one of quiet repose; of richness, even magnificence; of assured luxury.

Anne's footsteps made no sound as she walked on the great soft rugs that covered the floors, and the air she breathed was redolent with the heavy perfume of rare exotic plants, the like of which she had never seen.

In the large dining room the hostess blossomed forth in this artificial world in all her glory.

She greeted Aunt Emily and Anne with marked cordiality, and placed them, one on each side of her, at the great round table. On Anne's other side sat Henry De Bar—writer, critic, and journalist—a very fashionable and a very talkative young man, and withal quite handsome.

Farther around the table, his face half hidden in the dim light of a shaded candelabrum, his body clothed in immaculate evening costume, his face still bearing the signs of many scratches, sat Mr. Samuel Thornbur, *alias* Mr. Sidney Towne.

Aunt Emily, of course, recognized her husband when he first entered the drawing room; but Anne, who had never seen his ugly face uncovered, without mud and bandages, knew him not, which concerned her very little; for Anne was soon engrossed with the flattery of her hostess on one side and the very evident admiration of Mr. De Bar on the other side.

Next to Mr. Thornbur (*alias* Towne) sat Miss Eliza Murphy, that puissant and combative female of whom the great British Government stood in such abject fear. She wore the same sad countenance, and the same masculine costume in which she had addressed the meeting in Dorcas Hall, excepting that she had removed her hat.

Next to her was Miss Keen, the hopeful spinster of Mylo.

Politics makes strange associates. There was never, perhaps, so uncongenial a party gathered together before as that now assembled around Mrs. Bellmore's sumptuous table.

For good reasons, known to the reader, but not even surmised by their hostess, Aunt Emily and Mr. Thornbur never uttered a word beyond the necessary replies to any questions put to them; while Miss Murphy, from the time she sat down until the end of the dinner, maintained her usual gloomy reserve.

Mrs. Bellmore, with all her factitious training, was unable to start anything in the way of a conversation that would survive but for a few moments; then there would follow a most oppressive silence, broken only by the ticking of a large clock, fitted with chimes that announced the quarter-hour intervals.

It was Miss Keen, emerging from her state

of obscurity, who observed in a timid but penetrating voice:

"Twenty minutes of—" then she stopped suddenly. Anne laughed, Aunt Emily tried hard to repress a smile, while the others looked mystified.

The elegant Mr. De Bar spoke in low tones from under his drooping black mustache.

"Perhaps, Miss Forest, you will furnish us with an explanation of the—er—joke. I really feel that I am missing something."

Anne's sparkling glance went around the table and noticed the puzzled expression of her hostess, who was staring at Miss Keen in undisguised curiosity; the nervous apprehension of the latter, who felt that she had suddenly become the observed of all observers; the stony dumbness of the others—and she laughed again.

"Please," asked Mr. De Bar, "you are selfish to enjoy it all by yourself."

"Oh, it's really nothing; I don't know why it seemed so very ridiculous at the moment."

Mrs. Bellmore, who had not lost a word of the conversation, joined in Mr. De Bar's request.

"Please do, Miss Forest."

Then Anne explained that, in Mylo, when all conversation suddenly ceased, at a social gathering, it was the generally-accepted idea that it was twenty minutes of the hour.

Mrs. Bellmore looked quickly at the clock. "And that's what it is now," she laughed, gaily, "just twenty minutes of eight! Miss Keen, your premise is correct."

After that the dinner proceeded with more ease, the ice was broken, and the various little glasses, standing by the guests' plates, were being filled with amber-colored wine.

"Sherry," murmured the haughty English butler as he served the guests from a foreign-looking bottle cradled in its silver basket.

The effect of the wine on the various guests was curiously different. Mr. Thornbur, for example, after gulping his portion in one swal-

low, began to smile benignly on his neighbor, Miss Murphy, who seemed to grow more gloomy and more despairing than ever.

"I thank God," she began, "that I am of the superior sex." And, one having heard her speech at Dorcas Hall, would have known that it was a set speech, committed to memory, and that she would go through it like a talking machine, if some one would only start her.

The butler had started her with the sherry wine; and, before all the various glasses had been filled with their contents of claret and champagne, accentuated with a Roman punch, and creme de menthe, she had become difficult to suppress.

"Woman needs no apology," she said in a firm, resolute voice; "she speaks for herself."

And they certainly were all speaking for themselves at that blessed moment, each disclosing their peculiar idiosyncrasies as the wine loosened their tongues.

Mrs. Bellmore listened to General Murphy

for a few moments, and then, recognizing the record that was being played, she left her floundering amongst "the Greek women in the earliest ages," and turned, with the playful air of a young coquette, to Mr. De Bar.

"Remember, Mr. De Bar, about those photographs; don't dare to use them in your horrid newspapers!"

The experienced journalist laughed and inclined his head in mock submission to her mandate. "No, indeed, Mrs. Bellmore, nothing in the world could induce me to publish your portrait in to-morrow's 'Badger,' but I am hoping that your commands will not prohibit the publication of General Forest's portrait?"

He gazed searchingly into Anne's honest eyes; "it would produce a sensation, I am sure."

And under his impious eyes, his bold manner, the young girl felt ill at ease.

"Oh! by no means," she said hastily; "not for the world."

"Meaning that part of the world known as the County of Chester," Mr. De Bar insinuated.

"I mean all the world," said Anne, hotly, and the conversation lapsed.

"You have not touched your wine," he remarked casually, as he sipped from his glass of champagne.

"I believe I won't," she answered, doubtfully.

"But you must, you know," he asserted in a confidential undertone. "General Bellmore is our hostess;" and then, not wishing to advise her: "All the generals are expected, I believe, to appear—er—er—well, sort of masculine, you know."

Then, seeing her confusion and noting her perplexity, and her flushing beauty, he added warningly: "You're lucky if they don't ask you to smoke a cigar after dinner."

"Nonsense," said Anne, emphatically.

"Well, at any rate," he laughed, with en-

gaging good humor, "at least a cigarette."

Meanwhile the monotonous voice of Miss Murphy could be heard like the low mutterings of distant thunder:

"I tell you that we are fighting for the freedom of half the world's population—for the liberty of all women, against the tyranny of men."

"Oh, scissors!" said Miss Keen, impatiently, in a guarded undertone.

XVII

A LAWYER'S OPINION

"For this is the age of unrest and of discontent; the age in which we are not satisfied to walk soberly on our two legs, as our fathers and mothers did before us; but we must needs fly through the air like birds—and a nice slaughter we have made of it so far."

"But, Mr. Forest," said Harold, as he gazed out of the open window of his dusty little office, over the drug store in Mylo, "a certain number of accidents must happen, a number of lives lost before any invention is perfected; that is progression. But this feminine discontent."

"That is progression also," retorted daddy; "or so they would have us understand it."

"But where would such progress lead us?" inquired Harold. "Do you think that women should serve on juries, work in primaries, shouting and brawling in political campaigns;

making stump speeches, for her own election to some political job, hanging around the polls on election day?"

"Oh, they say that the men can do all that dirty work; all they want is just a nice lady-like vote on election day; just the matter of a few moments once or twice every three or four years."

"Then," argued Harold, "they admit, at once, that they are not man's equal; for if women demand the vote, then women must do the dirty work, as you call it, just the same as men; in other words, they admit the fact that men and women do have different functions to perform for the State."

"You tell that to Aunt Emily," said daddy, dubiously.

"Then they talked about wages for wives," said Harold, jeeringly, "until some man suggested that he was willing to pay his wife wages for her housekeeping work; provided that he could 'fire' her if her work was not satis-

factory, just as his employer would 'fire' him if he did not give satisfaction."

"That's common sense," daddy assented. "What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander."

"And legal equality," Harold went on, "legal equality, when the laws to-day are made for the protection of women."

"I believe there are some special laws of that kind," daddy affirmed.

"Sure," Harold asserted. "Why property-owning women are better off in law than property-owning men. A man must support his wife, but a property-owning woman is not compelled to support a worthless husband. A poor man must pay his wife's extravagant debts, but a rich wife is not compelled to pay the debts of her poor husband. Then a man must pay alimony, but not so with women!"

Harold was pacing around his dingy little office and smoking furiously. "And you call it progression to annul all these laws for the

protection of women and to make them legally equal?"

Daddy knocked the ashes from his pipe, got on his feet and stretched his long, sinewy frame.

"I didn't say it was progression. I said that the suffragettes would have us so understand it." He leaned both hands on the window sill and looked up and down the main street. "There is Abe coming now, good-by, Harold."

Harold watched the old yellow runabout until it disappeared around the corner.

"I would lock her up," he said, furiously, as he plunged into his law books with the desperation of a man who knows that he has been hard hit by a woman, but who scorns to acknowledge it.

And the curious part of the whole business was that daddy was in exactly the same condition, although Anne's name had not been mentioned in the entire conversation.

When daddy and Abe looked out over the

oats field they saw a marvellous sight. The little yellow flower had suddenly overspread the entire field, which is the way of wild mustard; and it had triumphantly outgrown the oats, so that the latter could not be seen; it was like one great yellow lake!

His face settled into lines of determination, of resolution:

"Now I know what to do. I'll mow the whole field—weeds and oats together—then I will plough it under and start over again with a crop of corn."

The moral of which is: That to cut down and extirpate a growth, such as wild mustard, it may become necessary to destroy a certain amount of good, flourishing, wholesome grain —and more is the pity.

XVIII

NOTORIETY

THE morning after Mrs. Bellmore's dinner Anne awoke to find herself notorious—which is quite a different thing from famous. Her portrait was on the front page of the "Daily Badger," side by side with that of Mrs. Bellmore, and of Miss Eliza Murphy. She gazed at the badly-printed and crude reproduction of herself with something like consternation. She opened the paper and found on the other side of the page an equally harsh impression of a woman who was accused of poisoning her husband; but it did not strike her as unenviable notoriety, for that reason alone, but simply because she had found such sudden publicity embarrassing and overpowering. During her entire lifetime she had never before seen her name in print; and now, in the darkest of heavy type, on the first page, she saw: "General

Anne Forest—a young and beautiful leader in the Woman's Crusade," after which followed nearly half a column of leaded type, describing in the most minute detail Anne's most particular and feminine charms. Anne blushed, even in the seclusion of her bed chamber, as she read the glowing description which she knew must have been written by Mr. De Bar; but, notwithstanding her confusion of mind, her unexpected plunge into the glare of the public prints, she was conscious of a quick exhilaration of spirits; she was filled with a delightful sense of extreme excitement, that made her heart beat high with hopes of some pleasure, some power that had come to her and which was now opening before her vision.

The humdrum life of the country was fast fading away, and she could scarcely realize the fact that it was only yesterday when she had said " good-by " to daddy, to Bob, the yellow cat, to old Charlie, to Spot, the little white and black heifer—to everybody and to everything

that made life at the " Birches " monotonous and uninteresting.

" General Anne Forest "—how fine it looked in print; how proud daddy would be. Well! she was not quite certain about that. She was now General Anne Forest, who would lead an Army of Women to Harrisburg, to demand their rights; what would Harold think about that? She was not quite sure just what it was that she was to demand of the legislative solons; but she would ask Mrs. Bellmore before she started. She had a nebulous idea that it was something like the Magna Charta, that basis of civil liberty, granted to the Barons by King John of England.

The New Magna Charta—something like that she would carry, rolled in silk covers, the demands of the women of Pennsylvania.

And the Governor of the State, who was not a King, but who would do for want of something more royal. The Governor would take the important document from her hands, read

it carefully, seriously; and then, with uplifted hand, would solemnly declare that from now henceforward and forever afterwards he promised the women of Pennsylvania that they would be free to vote as often as they pleased; and he would affix his signature, and the great seal of the state, to the document; and, after giving the pen to Anne for a souvenir, he would place her beside him on the reviewing stand as the great army of women marched past singing "Onward, Christian Soldier."

Anne was in this state of exaltation when Mrs. Bellmore burst into the room, puffing with excitement.

"Didn't I tell you, my dear, that dreadful Mr. De Bar—and I told him expressly not to use our photographs for publication; your Aunt Emily said the same thing about yours, you know."

"Oh," said Anne, thoughtfully, "then Aunt Emily gave him my photograph; I was wondering how he got it."

"By the merest chance in the world, my dear, your aunt happened to have one with her, and the man begged so hard."

She was bubbling, overflowing with happiness. "And what do you think," she added, her big round eyes sparkling with gratified vanity, "he is in the drawing room now."

"He?" inquired Anne, with an interrogation point expressed in her face.

"Yes, indeed, my dear; and he says that he won't go away until he has an interview with General Anne Forest, the rude fellow."

"An interview!" Anne paled to the tips of her pink ears. She had a vague idea of an interview with reporters. Once daddy had been interviewed by a young man who was connected with an agricultural paper, who had asked him all kinds of questions regarding the rotation of crops; and daddy had answered him in such beautiful English, with such abundant quotations from Virgil's Georgics, that the young man had gone away enveloped

in a sort of literary haze, to write his article as best he could.

Oh, yes; Anne knew what an interview meant; and she braced her mental resources accordingly, to meet Mr. De Bar in the drawing room.

That experienced young man was awaiting her, note book in hand.

"I am sorry to intrude on your privacy, Miss Forest," he began; "but when a young woman becomes the leader of an army, she becomes a public character; neither," he added with a merry laugh, "do I want some cub reporter to scoop the first interview; that is why I ventured to call at such an unseasonable hour; I'm afraid that I disturbed your dreams."

He assumed a light, bantering tone, a familiarity that caused Anne some uneasiness; but she answered him lightly:

"Oh, I was not asleep, I assure you."

He looked with very evident admiration into her bright eyes, and at her healthy red cheeks,

glowing with a sort of fanatical fervor; and he thought within himself: Henry, old boy, this is altogether the most phenomenal luck that has come your way ever since you were born. Was ever a war correspondent so blessed?

But to her he said: "Did you find the march very fatiguing, General?"

"Beg pardon," said Anne.

"Have you found the people very sympathetic along your route?"

"Route?" repeated Anne; "what route?"

"How many miles did the army make to-day?" he went on with reportorial gravity.

"Miles—to-day," repeated Anne, now so thoroughly bewildered that he began to laugh, gaily, at her perplexity.

"You see, Miss Forest, it's this way," he explained; "I must have this first day's march of yours written up and ready for the office before six o'clock this evening; so I am having an interview with you now."

"But how in the world can you write up a day's march when it has not even begun?"

"Oh, that's easy; a little imagination, that's all."

"But," demurred honest Anne, "it wouldn't be true."

"Oh, perfectly true," he assured her. "You see, this is not a fake interview, for I am talking to you, am I not?"

"Assuredly," Anne commented.

"Well," he elucidated, "all you have to do is simply to answer my questions."

"But how can I answer when I don't know?" she questioned.

Again De Bar's eyes sought hers; and, seeing naught but truth therein, he formed a quick resolution.

"It will not be necessary," he affirmed. "I will answer those questions myself;" he walked over to the heavily-draped windows and pushed the curtains aside, and looked out on the street. The day was clear, and the blue sky gave

promise of continued fine weather. Elderly business men were walking, with measured tread, to their offices. The passing street cars were full of younger men, and maidens, all going in one direction—to their work. "At what time do you start on your Women's Crusade?" he inquired; his casual remark veiled a cynical thought, and irritated her as she discerned it.

"You are evidently not in sympathy with the Cause," she said bluntly.

"Why do you say that?" he disclaimed. "What have I done, or said, to incur your rebuke?"

"Well, the way in which you said Women's Crusade."

He regarded the upturned, eager face, the red lips curving with childish impatience.

"That's just it," he contended manfully. "I meant to accent the word women, for somehow they never seem to get anywhere. I don't mean you, of course," he apologized; "but we

newspaper men have to record facts as well as imaginary stories, and I suppose we get somewhat hardened and cynical."

"What in particular?" Anne demanded.

"Well, prohibition, and Carrie Nation—they began in much the same way—by smashing things, you know; now, nobody hears of that Cause at all; it just faded and died."

Anne was furious. "Then you think that we—that I will just—fade and die?"

"In the nature of things, yes," he argued, plausibly.

"You mean that we will not succeed," she persisted.

He was vexed with her childish assumption, with her grandiloquent airs, with her impenetrable obstinacy, more manifest in her manner than in her words; but he was still smiling, politely.

"I would advise you, Miss Forest, to let Progress go her own gait; and let the Cause alone."

"Why?" she insisted.

"Well, for many reasons; here is one," he pointed to the window through which she could see a motly crowd of idlers who were ranged along the curb of the opposite sidewalk; all staring at the doors and windows of Mrs. Bellmore's house, awaiting the unusual sight of a procession of women.

"I don't understand you," she said, loftily.

"No? Then I will explain. You see all those people who are attending their own business, are passing this house without even looking at it, all hurrying down town to their work."

"Well, what of that? I don't see anything very remarkable in the sight; we work in the country, also; from morning till night," she reminded him.

"Exactly," he drawled, with exasperating slowness; "but that riff-raff clustered along the opposite curb, like flies on the sunny side of a wall, are idlers, and curious regarding you and

your Army. They appear to be the only class that are interested in your Cause."

He was standing by the window, his arms folded across his broad chest, looking down at her, as she thought, from his superior position, with somewhat of pity, somewhat of contempt in his attitude and manner.

"Well?" she questioned, raging inwardly.

"Well," he repeated, with the dignity of a magistrate who was giving advice to a first offender; "I would advise you to go back to the country and go to work."

That was the last word of opposition needed to confirm Anne in her resolution.

"How like a man," she said scornfully, and left him standing by the window alone.

"And what a snappy devilkin she is," muttered De Bar, hopefully; "worth a dozen Mrs. Bellmores—a column and—well, say a half—for to-morrow's issue, at least."

XIX

THE WOMEN'S MARCH

THE curiosity of the idlers who were loafing on the other side of the street was stimulated by the appearance in front of Mrs. Bellmore's house of a large and luxurious-looking automobile.

It was gaily decorated with yellow streamers, on which was displayed the slogan, "Votes for Women," together with numerous little American flags. The ubiquitous small boys immediately began making observations on things in general, and on women in particular. They swarmed around the car, hanging to it, and climbing over it like ants on an over-ripe pear. Instinctively these gamins felt that the car was, more or less, part of a travelling show, and acted accordingly.

Behind the big front door the three generals, Bellmore, Murphy, and Forest, were having an animated argument as to precedency, Anne in-

sisting that Mrs. Bellmore go first, then Miss Murphy, while she and Aunt Emily, together with Miss Keen, would bring up the rear.

But Mrs. Bellmore would not have it that way. "You must go first, my dear, being the real field general. I will follow, then Miss Murphy, our English ally, and your aunt with Miss Keen will bring up the rear."

So Anne found herself perched on the top step of a great brown-stone stairway, elevated as if she were on a rostrum, and facing the noisy crowd on the opposite side of the street. She was frightened, and she felt that her knees were trembling, and her heart quaking, as she saw four stalwart policemen brushing away the small boys who were crawling over the car.

A small company of photographers instantly focused her with their cameras; and, in her highly nervous and overwrought state, the sharp click-click of their snap-shots sounded in her sensitive ears like the cocking of so many revolvers.

The distance that she walked, which was simply down the steps and across the narrow side-walk, seemed to Anne like a torturing mile along a glaring and dusty turnpike. Her lips were parched, her throat dry, and her face was flaming with the most intense bashfulness. As she stepped into the car, and sat there alone, she was painfully conscious of the ribald remarks and laughter of the merciless crowd around her.

"Say, she's a peach; eh! what? well, I should smile!" Then a low growl of assent, and a chorus of cat calls.

Then Mrs. Bellmore appeared on the top step, and the crowd immediately gave her their attention. She smiled genially, and nodded graciously to the right and to the left; she had the manner of an empress giving an audience to even the meanest of her subjects.

"Ah! there's the old lady," came a penetrating voice from the common people. "Hello, mom; bless her dear old heart;" and so on, and in like manner, until they caught sight of poor

Aunt Emily and Miss Keen, timidly hovering over the top step.

"Oh, my! a pair of chickens," said the same strident, rasping voice; "come on down to the old hen!" then followed a burst of laughter.

General Murphy, who had preceded them down the steps with a measured, martial tread, turned fiercely to the policeman who was standing near.

"Why don't you arrest them?" The big reserve touched his cap respectfully.

"Sure, lady," he said, protectingly; "which one?"

She waved her arm in a sweeping motion that included every one in sight. "All of them," she commanded.

The officer began to explain. "You see, lady, our orders don't go that far; only them that commits a breach of the peace." He bowed and smiled pleasantly. "Now, if they was to try any familiar stunts, such as—well, mashing you, or them ladies there," he indicated

Aunt Emily and Miss Keen, "of course I'd run 'em in, quick."

Aunt Emily's face took on a grim, determined expression.

"I would like to see them try it," she remarked, wrathfully; and Miss Keen added, hopefully, "so would I."

Then Mrs. Bellmore told John, her chauffeur, that she would drive the car herself; which order necessitated a movement of down and out on the part of that dignified young man, much to the delight of the onlookers.

"Come off the perch, Johnnie!" yelled the talkative individual; "don't yer know it's lady's day?"

Meanwhile Mrs. Bellmore was nervously fumbling with the various little buttons and levers that controlled the car. "We don't need any men, my dear," she observed to Anne, who sat beside her; "we will show them that a woman can——"

"Mercy!" screamed Miss Keen, as the en-

gine started at full speed, with the noise of a nail factory, while the car plunged forward with a jerk that nearly dislocated her spine; "we'll all be killed!"

Anne shut her mouth firmly as Mrs. Bellmore drove the car in and out amongst the numerous vehicles that crowded the thoroughfare. Frequently they were on the wrong side of the street; often they were on the verge of running down an over-trusting pedestrian; a policeman held up a warning hand, but she sped by him on her reckless way, and finally arrived at the City Hall plaza.

There they were met by a much more numerous crowd than the one that had first greeted them.

The Women's Pilgrimage had been thoroughly advertised, and the spectators were assembled in a jostling, unruly, but good-natured mass that were roped off from the street. There were young men, old men and boys; principally youths of that nondescript

class that seem to suddenly spring from the earth itself; that indescribably noisome male humanity that seems to ooze from the alleys and byways of a great bursting city; among them could be distinguished a few women.

Anne looked over the sea of faces and questioned Mrs. Bellmore:

"The Army?" she said, with disappointment in her voice; "I don't see many women. What do you suppose has become of the Army?"

Mrs. Bellmore turned off the power of the chugging engine.

"Oh, everything must have a beginning, you know. You will make a start and they will all come swinging into line, I promise you. Eh!"

Miss Murphy was prodding her from the back seat. "I think," said the latter, "that this would be a fine opportunity to make a speech; you don't often get such an audience."

"Decidedly so," Mrs. Bellmore approved;

and General Murphy stood up in the car to deliver her speech:

"My sisters," she began, "I thank God that I am of the superior sex—that I am a woman."

"Amen!" responded a cheery voice at her elbow; he pronounced it "Ah-min," and they knew that he was Irish.

"For woman needs no apology—she speaks for herself."

"And for ivery wan else," said the Irishman, as he nodded his head with maudlin acquiescence.

There was a quick movement of two policemen; some one lifted the rope, and the loquacious son of Erin was marching down the street between them.

Miss Keen was feverish with pity. "Poor soul," she said, nervously. "I do hope that they won't hang him."

General Murphy went on:

"In the earliest ages Greek women had the right to vote in public assemblies."

"Oh, forget it," shouted a man from the middle of the plaza.

Several officers looked in that direction, and decided to take his advice.

Mrs. Bellmore tugged persistently the skirts of General Murphy.

"I think, my dear, that you had better cut it short."

Then she handed Anne a small road map and a large sealed envelope. "You will find the road to Harrisburg, my dear, from this map; it is really very direct, and there is no chance of losing your way—you are accustomed to walking?"

"Oh, yes," replied Anne, proudly, "I have frequently taken long walks in the country; often five or six miles at a time."

Mrs. Bellmore seemed to be amused. "Well," she said, assuringly, "I am quite certain that you will get there with the Army; the distance is only a little over a hundred miles, you know."

Miss Keen gasped. "A hundred miles—Mercy! we'll all be dead!"

Mrs. Bellmore attempted to suppress her with a cold, stern look. "You have all summer you know to get there, my dear."

But Miss Keen was not convinced; she kept repeating, in a sort of undertone, "A hundred miles, a hundred miles."

Mrs. Bellmore ignored her. "This letter," she said to Anne, "you will give, with your own hands, to his Excellency the Governor; never let it be parted from you during the whole trip; see, I have arranged it for you so you can wear it."

She placed it in a small receptacle, much like an old-fashioned school bag, and putting the strap over the young girl's head adjusted its length so that it rested on her left shoulder, and held the bag firmly suspended on her right hip.

"There, my General," she gurgled fondly, and fairly bubbling over with enthusiasm. "I wrote that letter myself, and— Mercy! those horrid photographers are snapping us again!"

She instantly struck a pose, something like Bonaparte, and stood perfectly still until the illustrators became tired of working their cameras. Then she faced the assembled multitude and began to talk:

"We are making history," she declared, vehemently; "to-day will be a milestone in the Women's Cause—a day of victory. To-day we shall begin a glorious march on foot; a—a—pilgrimage to Harrisburg. If you women wish to help us; if your hearts are stirred with our sorrows, your spirits with our wrongs, then join with us and march, march, to freedom!"

She sat down panting with her exertion and blissful under the titillating sense of her brief notoriety.

Suddenly a man, in the very centre of the crowd, raised a pole and unfurled an American flag, decked out with yellow streamers.

Instantly there was a loud cheering and clapping of hands as he forced his way through the clamor to the automobile.

"Here he comes! here he comes!" cried Mrs. Bellmore; "now, my dears, now is the psychological moment; follow me."

She stepped nimbly from the car to the broad asphalt pavement; and they stood at attention, or like a reception committee, until the man with the flag had passed them; then Mrs. Bellmore and her party fell in behind him in single file.

There was a movement in the crowd, a gradual disintegration, as one by one, then by twos and threes, they began to trail along after the colors.

Mr. De Bar threw away a half-consumed cigarette and twisted an end of his mustache.

"By jove!" he exclaimed, as he saw the people pouring off of the broad plaza into a narrow compact stream out Broad Street. "It looks as though she might pull it off this time."

Then he put his long legs in motion and ranged alongside of the marching column, and within easy conversational distance of General Forest.

XX

A HALT

"PARDON, ladies," De Bar said, politely, to Mrs. Bellmore and Anne, "but, I think that you have forgotten something, or—er—perhaps you intend to leave it there, until you come back from Harrisburg?"

"What's that?" asked Mrs. Bellmore, breathless with the fatigue of walking about three squares.

"The automobile," he reminded her.

"Bless me, so I did!" Then she called to the man with the flag: "Mr. Thornbur, won't you please give the flag to General Forest, and go back for the car."

Mr. Thornbur, *alias* Sidney Towne, wheeled around, presented the colors to Anne, and disappeared in the crowd of spectators.

"Do you know," said Miss Keen to Aunt Emily, "that I never liked the looks of that man!"

No answer.

"There's something deceitful about him—kind of sneaky," she went on; "dear me, these city pavements are hard on a body's feet; and he's so ugly, too."

No answer.

"I said he was so ugly," she repeated, as she raised her voice a trifle higher.

Aunt Emily was marching, with her lips firmly set, her eyes looking straight before her. The impudence of that man, to dare show himself again in her presence. That's what she was thinking, when Miss Keen spoke again:

"I guess you're sort of hard of hearing," she prattled; "I was, too, for a long time, but the doctor said it was wax." . . .

They had marched for perhaps four miles when Mrs. Bellmore suddenly discovered that the Army had lost its tail!

"Well, well," she exclaimed, as she looked over her shoulder at the attenuated body of stragglers, "where are all the women?"

"There were not very many women to begin with, you know," prompted Mr. De Bar. He had turned cynical again, and was angry with himself, because Mrs. Bellmore had washed the sand away from under his wonderfully well-balanced reportorial feet, with her theatrical little wave of enthusiasm.

"I can't walk a step farther," wailed Miss Keen, piteously.

Mrs. Bellmore looked ahead and saw the trees of Fairmount Park in the distance.

"General Forest," she said, "perhaps we had better call a halt when we reach the Park."

Anne's flag was becoming as heavy as a tent pole; but with De Bar's mocking eyes on her, she would have carried it to Harrisburg without a murmur or dropped dead by the wayside.

When they arrived under the grateful shade of the trees, Mrs. Bellmore was the first to drop, unceremoniously, on a sheltered bench. The noon-day sun was shining fiercely overhead, and she was hot and uncomfortable.

Miss Murphy, whose sad eyes were scanning the horizon, had discovered a large picnic party clustered on the slope of an opposite hill.

"We might go over there," she suggested to her perspiring hostess, "and make a speech to those people; we ought not to weary in well-doing."

Mrs. Bellmore looked at the calm face of the bloodless militant, who seemed to be as cool and determined as when they had first started, and then fanned her flaming face vigorously.

"Really, Miss Murphy," she said with veiled irony, "we would dearly love, you know, to hear your speech again; but really, my dear, you must not overdo it, you know."

"Oh, I don't mind it in the least," replied Miss Murphy, briskly; and off she went at a quick step to disturb the happy picnic party.

"Thus," in the words of our childhood poet, "Satan finds some mischief still, for idle hands to do."

Mrs. Bellmore arose, with very apparent

effort, and limped to the middle of the broad avenue, that swept its graceful, curving way through the Park. A little group of camp followers and reporters, who were moving around in the neighborhood, waiting for the next change in the Army's position, saw her standing there, with a pair of small pearl-mounted opera glasses, surveying the road over which the Army had just passed.

Imagine the Duke of Wellington anxiously sweeping the horizon with his field glass, on the battlefield of Waterloo; imagine him when he was saying, " Night or Blucher! " and one can have an idea of General Bellmore's attitude and state of mind, as she searched the road in vain for Mr. Thornbur, *alias* Sidney Towne, and her automobile.

It was really a serious matter. All the suffragette literature—the ammunition—the hamper containing the provisions, to be used on the first day's march; these necessary things were in the car in care of Mr. Thornbur.

"It's too bad," she exclaimed, irritably; "with all those lovely things to eat, too. I'm as hungry as a wolf."

Miss Keen improved the occasion by nudging Aunt Emily's elbow: "I knew there was no use in trusting a man with a face like his," she said in a low voice.

Aunt Emily, sitting bolt upright on the bench beside her, gave no heed to her remark.

"I said, with a face like his," she repeated. "I guess you didn't hear me." Then she gazed into the western distance: "A hundred miles!" she groaned.

Aunt Emily got up and walked with a firm, even step, to a shady spot on the cool green grass, which General Forest had selected for her headquarters.

"Anne," she said, briefly, "I think that it would be a good idea to send Miss Keen back to Mylo."

De Bar, who was stretched at full length with his back to a tree, made a brief calculation in

his note book. "That will reduce the fighting strength of the Army sixteen and six-tenths per cent.," he remarked, sententiously.

Mrs. Bellmore had turned her opera glasses toward the picnic party on the opposite slope of ground.

"Mercy!" she exclaimed, "what in the world is the matter with General Murphy?"

The Army could see the English militant, running toward them at top speed, and followed by the picnic party, who were jeering and throwing things at her.

She arrived at headquarters, breathless but defiant.

"They said they didn't want to hear my speech," she explained, "so I threw gravel all over their food!"

"What on earth did you do that for?" asked Miss Keen, with rising indignation. Altogether this revolt of the women, as far as she could see, was not benefiting any one.

"Oh, to keep things stirred up a bit. We'll

never get anywhere with the Cause, if we don't keep moving people around and making everybody uncomfortable."

"Well," said Mrs. Bellmore, definitely, "speaking of making people uncomfortable, I never was quite so hungry in all my life."

General Murphy's sad features relaxed into a condescending smile; the superior smile of one who has had a vast experience.

"You have never been in Holloway jail," she commented, bitterly, "as I have been."

De Bar sensed a story and fished around in his pockets for his notebook.

"Didn't they give you enough to eat?" he inquired, soothingly.

"Enough to eat!" repeated the General scornfully; "oh, yes, they gave me enough and plenty to eat; but I wouldn't eat it, you know."

"Poor quality, and badly cooked," ventured De Bar.

"On the contrary, the very choicest and most dainty morsels; broiled pheasant on toast, as-

paragus tips, delicious truffles and Moselle wine; all paid for by the Government to tempt me to eat."

"And you refused," cried Mrs. Bellmore; "dear me, I wish that I was in Holloway jail, right now; why I can't imagine such perversity."

She gazed longingly down the road, but Thornbur was not yet in sight.

"They even tried to force me to eat," said Miss Murphy, defiantly; "but they were obliged to give it up."

"Indeed; well! well!" Mrs. Bellmore spoke mechanically; her eyes were roving in every direction, her mind was occupied in devising ways and means of provisioning the Army. She called to Mr. De Bar.

That young man was deeply engaged in the pleasing occupation of trying to determine, definitely, whether Anne's eyes were black, dark blue, or hazel. It was a delightful study, for it happened that they were sometimes one color,

and sometimes another, according to her moods and the light that sparkled in them. And so he had no sooner decided that they were of a certain shade or color than he had to begin all over again, because they had changed to another.

He was applying his mind so closely to the subject that Mrs. Bellmore was obliged to raise her voice and address him again: "Mr. De Bar, won't you please——"

He started, like a guilty creature caught in the act, and blushed like a school girl. For some reason his embarrassment was communicable to Anne, so that she appeared equally guilty.

But Mrs. Bellmore was politely unconscious of their turpitude.

"Won't you please forage around with General Forest and see whether we are within reasonable distance of a café or anything. We really must have something to eat."

And so it happened that Anne and Mr. De Bar strayed away into the wilds of Fairmount Park, in quest of provisions.

XXI

DESERTERS

ANNE and De Bar walked on up the broad, winding roadway, in full view of the Army, for possibly a hundred yards. At this point the roadway was intersected by a perfectly straight, macadamized street. To their left and on the opposite side of the street, and not over one hundred feet distant from where they stood, was a large building, and across the entire front of this building was a sign on which was painted, in letters two feet high, and in the most conspicuous style, the word—

RESTAURANT

And yet, the truth must be told, this young couple failed to see the sign; and, turning to the right, were soon walking slowly but surely farther and farther away from their goal.

And their walk led them from the straight macadamized road to a small gravelled path-

way; and this in turn to a road that was no road at all, but simply a bridle path; soft and loamy under foot, and arched overhead with tangled branches of blossoming dogwood, and wild vines that twisted and intertwined in Nature's own inimitable way.

Here the air was heavy with the aromatic smell of the cool mosses and creeping plants that spread and clustered and blossomed at their feet. Here Anne was at home; for where we love is home, and this young sensitive girl loved the living things of the country that grow and increase year by year, and not the dead things of bricks and mortar, inert and impassive structures of iron and stone—the habitations of man, called the city.

Her mind, therefore, was serene and receptive as she sat down on the fallen trunk of an old tree and listened to the words of wisdom that fell from the lips of De Bar:

"Ugh!" he said, irritably, as he brushed aside the prickly branches of a wild black-

berry; "I would rather be a rat in a city garret than a nabob in the country."

"It's all a matter of taste and training," said Anne, meekly. "Have you any idea where we are?"

"Somewhere in the wilds of the Wissahickon," he replied, vaguely. Anne caught the glittering of dancing, gurgling, limpid water, reflecting the bright rays of a mid-day sun.

"Oh! it is so beautiful," she sighed with satisfaction. Her dark eyes took on a dreamy, far-away expression.

De Bar looked at her from the corner of his eye. What if this dreamy young enthusiast should suddenly become sentimental?

Now, while De Bar was not an old man, neither was he a youth, but a seasoned bachelor, who had aged before his time; a young man of vast experience with men and women, but principally women.

He was of the species that daddy would have

called "the early ripe, that soon goes to decay."

The warm air, the chirping of the birds that flitted around, the drowsy buzzing of insects, all acted on Anne as a soothing tonic. She was weary with the long walk of the morning; and as she relaxed, her martial spirit vanished, and she became, for the moment, just the same careless and joyous Anne of the "Birches."

A frightened little chipmunk bounced suddenly into the circle, looked at her curiously with its round, beady eyes, considered for a second whether it would not be advantageous for both if it should strike up an acquaintance; then it caught sight of De Bar and suddenly vanished.

Anne laughed at the little fellow for being so suspicious. She laughed for she felt that she was not suspicious of any one. The march to Harrisburg had faded from her mind; she was satisfied to be out of doors, to be alive.

She removed her hat, and a gentle breeze

took advantage of the circumstance to kiss her white forehead and her dimpled red cheeks.

As she stood on the old tree trunk and reached overhead for a fragrant blossom that had been daring her to pick it during the past five minutes, she made a very delightful picture, of which De Bar was keenly observant.

"Yes, it is rather pastoral out here," he declared. "I used to come here when I was a very small boy;" he sat down near her on the old tree.

"Yes," she smiled, encouragingly.

"I was a lazy little duffer," he confessed, "and would lie under a tree for hours reading Spenser's 'Fairie Queene' and trying to imagine myself a love-sick Colin tending his sheep."

"How lovely," she commented.

"Then as I grew older I became more fierce, possibly, for the open fields became tame, and I went deeper into the forest and hunted around for caves and dark, shady places."

"Are they near here?" she questioned,

He laughed at her absolute unconsciousness; then he got up and went a few steps toward the sound of gurgling waters.

"Just down there," he pointed; and she saw several broad, flat ledges of rock which overhung the rippling, purling waters of the Wissahickon.

"Oh! dear!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands in front, and gazing with a wistful, childlike longing at the rocks.

"Well?" he questioned, in a fatherly manner. Somehow the patriarchal attitude was the one that he deemed most befitting to the occasion.

"How I should like to go down there and—and—look for a cave," she sighed.

"Come on!" he said, jovially. "We'll go on a quest for the beast, and I will be Sir Launcelot, and kill him with my trusty two-handed sword."

He broke off a dead limb from the old tree and swung it buoyantly around with both hands.

"I don't like to contradict you," she said gaily, as he helped her down the steep bank; "but I think it was Sir Tristram who quested the beast."

When they were seated on the rocky ledge, De Bar fished out of his hip pocket a small book, with a much-worn red leather binding. "I have it here, young lady," he said, with that same over-lord manner; "and I shall proceed to prove that my remark was correct, and that it was Sir Launcelot who was always in quest of that terrible beast, and not Sir Tristram."

"Oh, please do!" cried Anne, rapturously; and she turned toward him a face as brimful of joyful anticipation as the face of a hungry child at a Thanksgiving feast, when the dessert comes on the table.

De Bar turned over the leaves quickly, then more slowly, then all over again, from the beginning of the little volume of "Le Morte d'Arthur." Then he looked more closely and began to read:

"And so King Arthur was in a great thought, and therewith he fell asleep. Right so there came a knight afoot unto Arthur and said, 'Knight full of thought and sleepy, tell me if thou sawest a strange beast pass this way.'

"'Such one saw I,' said King Arthur, 'that is past two mile; what would ye with the beast?' said Arthur.

"'Sir, I have followed that beast long time, and killed mine horse, so would God I had another to follow my quest.'

"Right so, came one with the king's horse, and when the knight saw the horse, he prayed the king to give him the horse: 'for I have followed this quest this twelve-month, and either I shall achieve him, or bleed the best blood of my lady.'

"Pellimore, that time king, followed the questing beast, and after his death Sir Palamides followed it."

She laughed a merry laugh. "Then it was neither Sir Launcelot nor Sir Tristram."

" Apparently, it was Sir Palamides," he said, with lofty condescension.

" Oh! I am so thirsty," she said, abruptly.

De Bar took a quick survey of the rocky bank of the creek.

" There used to be a fine spring here," he said, " wait a moment."

He hurried along the broad ledge, jumping from one point to another with the agility of a young chamois, and peering into the soft green that bordered the trees, he found the spring.

De Bar was in marching equipment, and producing from a capacious side pocket of his coat a large folding drinking cup he filled it and hurried back to Anne.

That young woman was reading from the little red-backed volume apparently unconscious of his approach.

He stood for a moment watching her profile sharply outlined against the dark background of the forest; her downcast eyelashes, the ab-

sorbed, interested half smile that played around her face.

"Read it aloud," he said, abruptly.

And she began:

"So to make short conclusion, La Beale Isoud was made ready to go with Sir Tristram, and Dame Brogwaine went with her for her chief gentlewoman, with Gouvernail. Then the queen, Isoud's mother, gave to her and Dame Brogwaine, her daughter's gentlewoman, and unto Gouvernail, a drink, and charged them that what day King Mark should wed, that same day they should give him that drink, so that King Mark should drink to La Beale Isoud, and then, said the queen, I undertake either shall love other the days of their life."

"Your health, La Beale Isoud," interrupted De Bar, solemnly. And he pretended to sip a little of the water from his travelling cup before handing it to her.

"Oh! but you are not King Mark, you know," she admonished him.

"I am glad of that," he retorted; "I would much prefer being Sir Tristram."

Then they both laughed, freely, heedlessly.

The water was purling a soft lullaby beneath their feet; the sun had passed the meridian, and was beginning to cast slanting shadows amongst the almost motionless leaves; the light breeze had died away to a mere zephyr; all Nature was indolent, drowsy—at peace.

They were rudely brought back to their ordinary, commonplace, present-day environment by the voice of Mrs. Bellmore, who was standing at the head of the tangled pathway that led down to the rocks. In one hand she held the little school-bag, containing her message, which Anne had agreed to deliver to the Governor of Pennsylvania, while, with the index finger of her other hand, she was pointing out, to the Army, their exact location on the rocky ledge.

"O-o-h!" gasped Anne, in an agonizing crescendo; "the provisions! we forgot all about the provisions!"

XXII

MR. TOWNE'S PERPLEXITIES

SEATED comfortably at a little table in a restaurant not far from the City Hall plaza, his thin legs stretched to their full length, his right hand toying with a tall glass full of ice, soda, and whiskey, commonly known as a highball, Sidney Towne was thinking the matter over between the puffs of smoke that issued from a long dark cigar.

And the more he thought of the things that had happened to him in the past few days the more irritable he became, and the more frequent were his draughts of the fizzing stimulant.

First of all, and the most exasperating, was his encounter with Harold Lukens, when the latter had overturned him and his car from the highway into an adjoining field. For this outrage he had conceived a deadly hatred toward Harold, and was forming all sorts of plans by which he could " get even."

His next grievance was his most unexpected meeting with his wife, Aunt Emily, from whom he had been separated for years; and her contemptuous, in fact, it might be called her insulting reception and dismissal; this rankled deeply in his breast, and more particularly because he knew that he deserved it.

Then, the two former reasons for his anger were as nothing compared to the third: his rather compromising relations and entanglement with Miss Eliza Murphy, to whom he had been paying the most marked attention as Mr. Samuel Thornbur, bachelor; not only during their trip together across the ocean, but since then and up to the present time.

These thoughts were weaving through his brain, and, mixing with the fumes of alcohol and tobacco smoke, were causing Mr. Towne much annoyance and vexation of spirit. He felt reasonably sure that Aunt Emily would never reveal his identity in public, and that she was perfectly willing to release all her conjugal

rights; but, supposing that Miss Murphy should find it out in some other way!

There was the rub, for the love of a militant suffragette was something not to be trifled with.

So Mr. Towne drank several more high-balls to sooth his ruffled feelings; then another one just as a bracer; and the last one suddenly recalled the fact to his memory that Mrs. Bellmore's automobile was still standing on the City Hall plaza. Arriving there, he found it swarming with small boys, who were tooting its impudent, discordant horn every time that the policeman turned away his head.

That guardian of the peace looked at him suspiciously as he stumbled into the car, and then rapidly wobbled his way out Broad Street in search of the Army.

"For half a cent," said the officer to himself, doubtfully, "I'd run that fellow in." He had his whistle at his lips and then changed his mind. "Aw! what's the use?" he thought, dejectedly. "If I landed him the old lady Bell-

more would soon have me dancing on the carpet at headquarters; fellows like me don't have to see everything."

Then he waved his hand, and, at the sign, was heard the roar of traffic, stopped for the moment, and now resuming its noisy way at the crowded intersection of the city's most busy streets.

Mrs. Bellmore had about given up all hope of seeing Mr. Towne, for that day at least, when he came into sight, with the car careening from side to side like a speedy tug boat in a heavy swell.

She greeted him with as much anger as could be expressed on her round, fat, foolish face, and then proceeded to bivouac under the park trees.

It was at this moment when Mr. Towne's complications became acute; for Miss Murphy was making certain covert little signs of tenderness toward him, that in themselves were not particularly noticeable to an onlooker; but

there was his wife, her colorless eyes fixed rigidly on the English militant.

She was watching her with that peculiar fixity of manner, that observing, silent examination under which Mr. Towne had writhed and wriggled, and turned and twisted, but could not get away from, during all the miserable years of his married life.

He explained to Mrs. Bellmore how he had had engine troubles, tire troubles, valve troubles—and, he might have added, troubles of his own—when General Murphy walked to his side, sniffed the air, and announced, sadly:

"Don't believe a word he is saying, Mrs. Bellmore."

That good-natured woman lifted her eyebrows with surprise, and then came to the poor man's assistance.

"But really, my dear," she said, soothingly, "I have no reason to doubt Mr. Thornbur's word."

"Mr. Thornbur!" exclaimed Aunt Emily—

and the miserable victim of her scorn felt that his hour had come—"have you brought any provisions with you?"

He looked at his wife gratefully, and dived under the seats in his search for various packages of food.

"Here," he said aloud; and, one by one, he handed to Aunt Emily every bundle that was in the car.

Then he withdrew to the shade of a small clump of shrubbery, in front of which floated the American flag.

There he sat down and lighted his pipe in peace; it seemed to him like the protected ground of a consulate in a foreign and hostile country.

Miss Murphy sized up his contentment from a corner of her mischief-making eye; then she sauntered leisurely to his resting-place and sat herself down on the grass beside him.

"I have a good mind to tell them what I know about you," she insinuated.

Mr. Towne, looking over her head, met the fixed gaze of his wife; but, somehow, her expression was so different from that to which he was accustomed, that he laid his pipe on the grass and stared at her in astonishment. She was smiling—actually smiling, and, contracting her forehead impulsively, she smiled encouragingly, confidentially.

He was so surprised that he quickly turned his head and looked behind him, expecting to see a third party to whom Aunt Emily was sending wireless messages of hope and assistance.

But there was no one else there, so he smiled in return and tried to interpret her message. And it seemed to him to read in much this way: "Sidney, you poor, lonely creature, don't let that woman get the better of you; be a man!"

Then he answered Miss Murphy: "You may tell them anything you please," he said firmly; "they won't believe you."

"Indeed!" She got up and left him sitting

there, his feeble courage reviving and slowly expanding.

With a sigh he resumed his pipe and half closed his eyes in revery.

Why not be a man? He recalled a little house in England surrounded by tall hedges; a small enclosure of only a few acres, with trees in blossom; a few fat cows and sheep; a plenty of everything to eat and drink; a cheery old mother who cooked, with her own skilful hands, the bountiful dinners that awaited him each day of his simple, honest boyhood.

It was there, living in an adjoining cottage, that a young, pale-faced girl had first attracted his attention; a thoughtful, brooding, intense girl, who now was his wife.

How remarkable she had seemed to him then. How interesting and mysterious she had appeared, because she read books on advanced thought, sociology, psychology, and kindred subjects. Then she had pursued her studies at a town seminary; while he, an awkward,

shambling country clown, knew nothing. Then, when she had returned to the little adjoining cottage, how proud he had felt, to what a pinnacle she had raised him when she had preferred him to all the lads of the neighborhood.

How hard he had worked to obtain employment in the great city of London; and he was to be married a few days before entering on the duties of his new position. How they had left home full of anticipation and hope!

Then came the grim battle for existence, and the struggles of a weak man, joined to a visionary woman; his failures, following so closely, one after the other, that he had no interval of rest, of recuperation; and the inevitable result—drink.

The rest was not worth thinking about; but he remembered many, so many frantic efforts to pull himself out of the mire, in which he knew he must be lost—alone.

He was not an old man yet, neither was his wife an old woman. He raised himself on one

elbow and looked at her, distant but a few yards, and her pale, drawn face at the same instant turned toward him; her eyes, her sad, colorless eyes, were swimming with tears. He knew that such was the case; for she was winking and blinking in a manner well known to him in the old days, after each day of failure.

His courage was no longer feeble; his mind was reaching out for another foothold; the soul of the man was bravely battling with the flesh.

His homely face and bearing took on an expression that made him almost attractive as he grasped the colors, quietly took his position, and marched along the curving drive-way at the side of poor Aunt Emily.

Neither spoke a word.

XXIII

GENERAL ANNE FOREST

"I THINK," said Mrs. Bellmore, when Anne and De Bar had rejoined the Army, "that it will never do for us to sleep in Philadelphia, or to go back home to-night; we must march on somewhere, to some place, for the good of the Cause."

"We might go home this evening, by the trolley cars," suggested Miss Keen, plaintively, "and come out again early to-morrow."

Mrs. Bellmore laughed a full, rich, unctuous laugh; she was feeling so much better, since the provision car had caught up with the Army. "Why, my dear, that would be absurd; who ever heard of an army going home every evening, and beginning again the next morning?"

Miss Keen, who never liked to "sleep out," as she expressed it, remarked: "It isn't much of an army anyway."

"But the principle, my dear, the principle; think of that!"

Miss Keen had thought of it, all through the fatigue of that hot dusty walk, and the more she thought the better she was convinced that she had never participated in a more ludicrous performance. And her thoughts had crystallized into a steady determination that, cause or no cause, she would desert from the Army that very evening and that she would return to the peaceful comfort of her own single bed—in Mylo.

"I'm as much for principle as anybody," she replied to Mrs. Bellmore, with spirit; "but I don't see that my duty, as a truthful and God-fearing woman, consists in gandering around the country with a rabble at your heels, and neglecting your own work at home."

De Bar laughed, and Anne looked uncomfortable; Mr. Thornbur and Aunt Emily were hovering in the back-ground.

Miss Murphy came to the aid of her hostess.

"I thank God that I am a woman," she began; and it seemed for a moment as though she was going to recite her little speech, but Mrs. Bellmore suddenly interrupted her.

"Yes, yes, indeed," she said, in that drawling, smothering manner of hers; it was like a soft down quilt in which she wrapped one tenderly, gently, but most conclusively; "but we must arrange, my dear, for camping out, to-night."

"Camping out!" exclaimed Miss Keen; "good-by, all; I'm going to catch the six-five train for Mylo; and I think," she added, "that you had better come, too."

She nodded to Aunt Emily and Anne, but they both shook their heads, negatively; and Miss Keen departed.

The common soldiers, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Towne, sat down on a log by the wayside, while Generals Bellmore, Murphy, and Forest held an animated debate regarding their further movements.

It was finally decided that General Bellmore would return to the city for the night; while Generals Murphy and Forest would lead the Army westward.

"And Mr. De Bar," said General Bellmore, graciously, "I shall be glad to have your company back to town."

"But where? what?" asked Anne, bewildered; "we can't stay here all night, you know."

"My dear," Mrs. Bellmore assured her, in her most gracious and condescending manner, "of course you can't; you must march on, you know, until you get to some convenient town containing a suitable hotel; and there you can stay for the night, and resume your march in the morning."

Anne bit her under lip and looked out over the trees at the rosy coloring of the setting sun. For a moment she wished heartily that she had never engaged in so grotesque an enterprise. The host of women that she was to lead triumphantly to Harrisburg had dwindled down

to Aunt Emily and Miss Murphy! The so-called Army was sitting on a log engaged in the laughable operation of picking burrs from its clothing.

She caught De Bar's eyes only to find in them a bantering derision. De Bar, who, only a few moments before, was impressing himself on her imagination as a possible knight of the Round Table; De Bar, who in the morning had advised her to go home, and to go to work! De Bar, the cultivated, cynical man of the world, now sneering at her in her absurd, her droll predicament!

She could have wept with rage as he raised his hat to her, with an ironical gesture, and helped Mrs. Bellmore into her automobile.

"Good-by, General," he smiled, mockingly. "I would advise you to get back over the river, and avoid Merienda; they're not particularly friendly to the Cause in the Mill District—women, cheap labor, you know. Go for Overville; or perhaps you might get as far as

Altwood. You have three or four hours yet of daylight."

Then he leaned far out of the other side of the car and beckoned to Mr. Thornbur. "Roll up that flag," he whispered in his ear, "and get away from here as quietly as you can; keep on the Leicester turnpike until you get somewhere."

"Mr. De Bar, what are you whispering to Mr. Thornbur?" inquired Mrs. Bellmore, petulantly.

"Oh, a war correspondent is quite a privileged character, you know," answered De Bar. "We are supposed to have private knowledge of all that concerns an army; and, by the way, I suppose that the paymaster will be along soon."

"The paymaster?" said Mrs. Bellmore, with a puzzled expression on her face.

"Um! the fellow who provides for and who pays the bills for the expenses of the army; the —er—quartermaster, you know."

The light broke into Mrs. Bellmore's cranium, and illuminated her understanding. Money was such a trifling matter with her. When she wanted anything she simply expressed her thought; and, behold, the thing was done—by her secretary, or her housekeeper, or perchance it might be by her butler.

An expansive smile wreathed her round, full face.

"How funny! why of course," she said assuringly. "I really forgot all about it." Then she fumbled around in her leather handbag and fished out a small purse of meshed silver.

"Mr. Thornbur," she said, as she handed him the trinket, "you shall be the paymaster—and quartermaster—of the Army."

Then she pressed a button, and the luxurious car moved silently, slowly, then swiftly down the smooth park roadway, and was soon speeding homeward.

"You will dine with me this evening?" said Mrs. Bellmore, as she turned a sharp corner,

within a foot of colliding with a trolley car, and stopped in front of her door.

The chauffeur appeared from some hidden watching-place; and, at the same moment, the great front door opened noiselessly, as if of its own volition.

" Delighted," he bowed in acknowledgment.

" At seven o'clock," she reminded him.

" At seven, thank you."

He half turned to go.

" Oh, Mr. De Bar," she called after him; " take my car, do please, anywhere;" then she turned to the chauffeur who had already taken his seat. " Anywhere, John," she ordered, and then disappeared through the open doorway.

Mr. De Bar sank back in the deeply-padded cushions. " What a curvilineal life she leads," he mused; " no angles, no sharp corners, no straight unbending line of duty—everything rounded off, polished, gently curving along the path of least resistance. By Jove!" he pondered, half aloud, " what under the blue canopy

makes her want equality with man? If there was ever a human being of the privileged class she certainly is that person! Why, take a man in her position, and he would be working like a dray-horse!"

The chauffeur inclined his head stiffly.

"I beg your pardon, sir, but where did you say?"

"Where?" De Bar thought for a moment of his dingy boarding-house on Spruce Street, and instantly had an inspiration.

"To the Belleview," he said casually.

XXIV

DE BAR'S STORY

WHEN De Bar entered Mrs. Bellmore's dining room he was, more than ever, curious to know the motive that inspired her to join the Army of the Everlastingly Discontented.

A shaded lamp of massive workmanship hung suspended from the vague darkness of the lofty ceiling, casting a mellow light on the snowy-white table linen.

Around this central orbit were fairy lights, forming smaller circles of light and casting delicate, feathery shadows through the graceful ferns that adorned the table. The rest of the room was in shadowed darkness.

Through the dim light around the carved oaken table he saw Mrs. Bellmore and a very old lady whom she introduced as "my husband's mother." The latter was very deaf, and her deadly white face gave no signs of

interest until she was spoken to directly and in a loud tone of voice.

The conversation at the table was, therefore, not very lively or interesting; and De Bar was glad when the dinner was over and he was invited to smoke a cigar in a cosy little room adjoining the library.

"My den," explained Mrs. Bellmore. "I don't know any reason why women should not have dens as well as men," she added combatively; but De Bar would not take up the cudgels. The dinner had been well cooked and the service and wine faultless. He examined the cigar that she gave him with some suspicion, but found that it was excellent and quite in harmony with the dinner.

"No reason whatever," he replied, contentedly; "nor is there any reason why they should not smoke cigars, the same as men; won't you join me?"

He politely handed her the elaborate smoking set, a curious combination with a thing for

cigars, a thing for ashes, a thing for cigarettes; a thing for everything connected, even remotely, with the gentle usage of smoking tobacco. It was much like an old-fashioned cruet stand that held an honored place in the centre of our forefathers' dining table.

Mrs. Bellmore laughed like a school girl. "Well, no, thank you; I don't like cigars."

"Perhaps you prefer a pipe?" he went on, daringly. He was wondering what she would look like smoking a nose-warmer on her way to the office on a wintry morning!

"I have never been able to do more than one or two whiffs of a cigarette," she answered sadly.

He puffed his cigar in silence while the flickering light from a small wood fire emphasized the fine points of his handsome face and manly proportions. As she watched him from beneath her half-lowered eyelids she felt a sudden desire to make him more comfortable; to run and get his slippers; to hand him the evening

paper; to put his pipe and tobacco jar conveniently near his elbow—in fact, to do for him the many little services that only a woman can do for a man.

Then her mood suddenly changed.

"I am so glad that you took such a fancy to Miss Forest," she began sweetly.

"Miss Forest?"

He looked up with a counterfeited expression of surprise, an assumption of ignorance that did not deceive her in the least, and of which she took no notice.

"Such a lovely girl," she went on, "so earnest and so devoted to the Cause."

"The Cause," he repeated, absently. "Oh, yes, quite so. I wonder where she is now—I mean the Army; it must be quite chilly for them out on the Leicester pike this evening."

Mrs. Bellmore shrugged her ample shoulders: "I am sorry that I took you away from her—really I did not think that——"

"Nonsense!" he interrupted her. "I would

have left the whole foolish business hours before, only I was afraid to face the managing editor without having a complete story."

Then she came directly to the point:

"What were you reading to Miss Forest from that little red book?" she demanded abruptly.

It was not the simple question that caused De Bar to sit up stiffly and stare at Mrs. Bellmore with smouldering wrath lurking in his dark eyes; it was her manner, and the tone of her voice. Both were peremptory and overbearing to the last degree.

Five hundred years ago there was living a Henri De Bar whose château, in the department of the Nord, in France, overlooked miles of sandy hillocks to the harbour of Dunkirk; and toward the east he was absolute Seigneur and master of all the land that could be seen from the topmost battlement of its highest tower. It was a monotonous but exceedingly fertile country, intersected by sluggish streams and canals;

but, withal, it was inhabited by a prosperous and contented peasantry.

He died, impoverished by his benefactions, but worshipped by the poor.

The château is still there, but at night the mournful hoot of an owl has replaced the songs and mirth of former days. The forlorn old courtyard is full of broken paving stones, whose gaping interstices are filled with a rank growth of fungus and weeds. There was an old painting of Henri De Bar du Nord that was bought by a rich American from a dealer in Paris and brought to this country. And a small photographic copy of this painting was hanging in De Bar's room in his boarding-house on Spruce Street. Which was all that he had, all that was left to remind him that he was a gentleman, and the direct lineal descendant of a good man.

And the thought filled him with pride, so that he scorned the power of mere money as exemplified in the person of Mrs. Bellmore.

And he answered her lightly: "That little red book was my bible—I always carry it with me."

"No doubt," she retorted, "you were holding services in the woods like a—a—camp-meeting."

"Exactly," he nodded, quizzically, "or like Sir Galahad; you remember what a time he had holding services on his marches."

But she did not know, and so could not remember anything about Sir Galahad; and the fact made her face turn suddenly red; she was flushed and uncomfortable, and she changed the subject.

"Have you your report ready for to-morrow's paper?" she began imperiously.

"Report?" he repeated, questioning. Her brows contracted, making perpendicular wrinkles between them.

"Your report on—on the march," she reminded him impatiently. For some reason De Bar had become unaccountably obtuse.

"Oh! the story, for to-morrow," he smiled good-naturedly.

"Read it," came short and quick from her Highness.

He looked up at her full, red face, at her contracted brows, at her heavy, masculine mouth; and at the moment his mind was illuminated. "Oh, I know now," he answered himself, inwardly; "I know why this woman has taken up the Cause—she wants to rule."

Then, rejoicing in his perspicacity, he drew a broad, thin notebook from the inside pocket of his evening coat and read, from a blank page, something that was not written:

"It is headed," he commenced slowly, "'Women Hike to Harrisburg.'"

"Women what?" said Mrs. Bellmore. She was tapping the floor irritably with the toe of her slipper.

"Hike," he explained, "meaning to take a long walk; a comparatively new word, short and expressive; don't you think so?"

She did not say what she thought, but sat in stony silence.

"You asked me to read it, you know, but if——"

"Go on," she commanded. He resumed his pretended reading:

"'This city was treated to a novel sight yesterday when a little band of women assembled at the City Hall plaza under the leadership of Mrs. Erastus Leander Bellmore——'"

"Pardon," she interrupted, "General Forest led the march."

"Ah! so she did." He noted the correction with a much-worn gold pencil that he kept for state occasions. "General Forest—um—General Anne Forest, was it not?"

Her toe was moving faster, the tapping more pronounced; she interrupted him: "The young lady with whom you became lost for over two hours in the wilds of the Wissahickon, you remember."

She had pricked him. He winced, obviously,

under the sudden sting, but came back smiling, and continued:

"With the avowed intention of walking to Harrisburg and carrying a petition to the Governor and the Legislature in behalf of woman suffrage. It was Mrs. Bellmore's idea that this little band of the faithful——"

He stopped, his pencil held aloft—"shall I say there Mrs. Bellmore or Miss Forest?"

"Well, it was my idea," she confessed, and he went on:

"Faithful would prove to be the nucleus about which would gather a vast army of women imposing in their numerical strength; but, so far, these expectations have not been realized."

This time the honors were with De Bar, for Mrs. Bellmore's toe became suddenly quiet, and her face showed keen disappointment.

"Last evening," he concluded, "the so-called Army, consisting of four persons—three women and one man—were hoping to

spend the night at some hotel conveniently located to the Leicester road, resuming their hike to-day."

He closed the little flat book, in which nothing had been written, excepting the name "Anne Forest," and stood up, smilingly at his ease.

"Thank you so much for a pleasant evening," he bowed, and disappeared into the great hallway.

Mrs. Bellmore arose and swept, walked, majestically across the "den" to a push button in the wall.

A maid-servant appeared on the threshold of an inner door.

"That—that—gentleman," she stuttered, with suppressed rage, "should he call again—I am not at home—not at home—do you understand, Mathilde?"

The little maid nodded her head:

"Oui, oui, parfaitement; madam n'est pas chez elle."

XXV

THE FIRST NIGHT OUT

WEARY and footsore, the little Army, under the command of General Anne Forest, limped into comfortable quarters near the little town of Altwood, distant about ten miles westward from the City Hall plaza. A few local sympathizers had formed themselves into a reception committee and Miss Murphy was induced once more to deliver her speech, beginning: "I thank God that I am a woman," in the town hall. It had not excited any particular enthusiasm amongst her hearers excepting the males, most of whom, after taking a critical survey of the meeting and of the speaker, fervently thanked God that they were not women, and then had departed for their happy homes before Miss Murphy had time to stop talking and take up a collection.

This latter piece of forgetfulness on the part of her male auditors had put such a crimp in

her temper that she launched out into her most bitter invective, in her after-talk with the local committee.

"You women," she said, hotly, "should organize an army that is worthy of the name—an army of women that can protect themselves from the brutality of the men. In London we are organizing a suffrage army, the members of which will be drilled in the use of clubs, fists, and jiu-jitsu."

"What will you do then?" inquired a sunny-haired girl, who was absorbing the war talk with engrossed attention.

"Oh, we expect to beleaguer the House of Lords and Commons, and attack the members of the British Ministry."

"But the police," suggested a law-abiding matron.

General Murphy looked fiercely determined: "Oh, we shall outnumber the police three to one in any crisis. We hope to imprison most of the Cabinet Members."

"How perfectly lovely," exclaimed the sunny-haired girl, with kindling enthusiasm; "then, when you have those horrid Cabinet Members in jail what will you do?"

"Well," said Miss Murphy, "we shall have everything that we want."

There was a pause in the conversation for a few moments, during which time Anne sat by the side of the militant, feeling strangely uncomfortable.

She had recognized, amongst the audience, the familiar faces of Mrs. Burleigh, the banker's wife; the Misses Blackwell, and—she was almost sure—that Harold Lukens was there, sitting in the shadowed rear of the hall. And with such a curious expression on his face. Her head bent lower as Miss Murphy announced in a loud voice:

"We are practical politicians. We are not tilting at windmills; and to get what we want we must make ourselves a nuisance; we must be dangerous and obstinate—burn and smash

things, break windows, destroy letter-boxes!"

The law-abiding matron put her hand before her mouth and whispered to Anne, who was sitting beside her:

"Do you know what we do to our children when they talk or act that way?"

Anne nervously shook her head.

"We spank them!" said the matron, with rising indignation; "and I have often wondered why the British Government doesn't do the same."

Anne was shivering with apprehension and excitement. She knew that Miss Murphy's eyes were upon her; and the thought that she might be called on to suddenly declare her opinions, in public, so agitated the young girl that she became entirely unstrung. In this deplorable state of mind she got up quickly and left the hall.

Once outside of the badly-ventilated building, and away from the surcharged atmosphere of restless discontent, she inhaled the soft air of

the May evening. The fresh country air was impregnated with the odor of blossoms and laden with the promise of a goodly harvest.

She raised her chin and took deep breaths of its health-giving, invigorating fragrance.

"Oh, the country air!" she murmured, as she felt its reviving influence. A man with a strong, heavy step was coming up behind her. She walked more slowly, to permit the person to pass by, but the person evidently did not wish to pass by. Then she quickened her pace, and so did the man with the heavy step. Now, she was ready to fly, and she gathered up her skirts in preparation, when a strong hand grasped her arm, and a voice that she had known since childhood sounded in her ears: "Anne!"

"Oh, Harold!" she said, impulsively. She wanted to throw her arms around his neck, to cling to him, to shelter herself under his strong, masculine protection; to ask his advice. She was so glad to see him.

"Come on home, Anne," he pleaded, boy-

ishly; "there's a train leaving here at eleven o'clock. We can walk from the station."

"Oh, Harold! I couldn't do that," she reminded him, very gently.

"And why not?" he argued.

"Well, I—I—sort of feel obliged to—to—go on," she said, thoughtfully.

The little satchel, with its message to the Governor, was under her arm, and its presence strengthened her resolution. She was no longer anxious to show a young man, about twenty-four years old, how great she could be; she felt, somehow, that he was already conscious of her vast superiority over him. He must have seen her portrait in the newspapers. He must have read all about the march—about General Forest. But there was her duty, straight before her, as plain as day. She had taken command of the Army, and she had promised Mrs. Bellmore that she would deliver her message to the Governor; there was no way out of it, for a girl of Anne's moral fibre.

"Obliged, how?" he persisted. "You only have to tell them that you are going home, and then go; that's all there is to it."

She smiled, rebukefully. "You don't know me, Harold. Why, that would be treason—deserting the Cause."

"Oh, the Cause be——!"

"What?" she hastily withdrew her arm, and waited.

"I didn't say," he disclaimed, quickly, while he tried to recover her hand.

She stopped in the middle of the road and sternly faced him. The eternal stars overhead were winking and blinking, in a way that only stars can wink and blink, at the pitiful sight of two lovers, quarrelling.

"Harold Lukens!" she demanded, "tell me exactly what you were going to say; tell me the truth."

"As you will," he acquiesced. "I was going to say, the Cause be adjudged to everlasting punishment in the future state."

"Why?" she laughed.

"Because it takes you away from me, and makes me unhappy," he admitted.

She looked at him, wistfully. "Harold, I must stay with the—the—with the party; I must, really," she said, apologetic.

"How long?" he queried.

"Well, until we get there—or give it up."

"I think I know one of your party who won't get there," he pondered. "Who is that fellow who carries the flag?"

"Mr. Thornbur," she answered.

"Do you know his first name?"

"Samuel," she added, briefly.

"Samuel Thornbur—S. T.—the very same man. I thought so," he muttered, exultantly.

"Apropos of what?" she questioned.

"Oh, nothing in particular. I knew his face was familiar, that I had seen it before."

"It's a face you wouldn't forget," she said, mirthfully. Then she took his arm and guided him back toward the hall.

"I must go now; good-by." She left him, standing under a street lamp, and entered the hall, where the worn-out reception committee were still receiving General Eliza Murphy.

He followed her with his longing eyes until the hall door had opened and closed. Then he pulled a much-soiled handkerchief from his side pocket and examined it closely, by the bright lamp-light.

"S. T.—that's right. I knew I couldn't be mistaken. Well, Mr. Samuel Thornbur, you will not make the walk to Harrisburg, not this time, at any rate," he said, with determination. "And," he added, gleefully, "that brings the Army down to three lone women."

A policeman, lounging on the other side of the street, was keeping one eye on Harold and the other eye on the door of the Town Hall. He walked leisurely across the road.

"Well, Mr. Lukens, what do you know?" he inquired, in an undertone.

"That's the man, all right," replied Harold.

The officer straightened his back and looked determined. He had read of the difficulties that the British policemen had encountered at the hands of the militant suffragettes, and was preparing himself for the worst.

"Oh, we won't take him in there," said Harold, assuringly. "Just keep your eye on me as they come out of that door, and nab the man to whom you see me talking."

And so it happened that, when Mr. Sidney Towne, *alias* Samuel Thornbur, trailed out behind the reception committee, he was accosted by Harold, and, at the same moment, nabbed by the policeman, on a warrant charging him with disorderly conduct, the theft of an overcoat and sundry small articles of virtu; the property of John Forest.

It was all done so quietly, so expeditiously, that the few passengers in the smoking car of the eleven o'clock train to Mylo knew nothing of the arrest or of the hidden rage that filled the heart of Sidney Towne.

XXVI

THE ARMY DISINTEGRATES

BUT the newspapers, Argus-eyed, vigilant; those watchful guardians of public morals and probity; those paper censors of the people, in which is printed almost everything as soon as it happens, and some things before they happen, contained, the next morning, a full and complete account of the circumstances under which one Harold Lukens, attorney of Mylo, had caused the apprehension of Samuel Thornbur, suffragist, and color-bearer of the Women's Army that was marching on Harrisburg!

Alongside of this was another article, which might have been inspired by De Bar, in which the writer called attention to the fact that this sudden snatching away of the Army's only man had reduced its numerical strength from four persons to three; or just twenty-five per cent.

The writer, who was evidently a cold-blooded, calculating genius, added:

"At this rate, supposing that the Army loses

one member every ten miles, it will disappear, disintegrate, evaporate into thin air, before it marches thirty miles farther, or in the neighborhood of Pomeroy-Vale."

To say that Miss Murphy was furious, when she read these articles, is to use a mild qualification for the want of a stronger. She was raging, frantic; full of fierce passion and of wild invective. She was the most dangerous of the human species—an angry woman.

For half an hour, or more, she went on a rampage, the extent and variety of which can only be imagined but not described.

"Who is this Harold Lukens, anyway?" she finally found words to question.

Some one ventured the reply that Mr. Lukens was a young man, a farmer, a lawyer; a respected and useful citizen of the town of Mylo, distant about ten miles westward.

Miss Murphy lapsed into silence; the quietude of old Bob—you remember the yellow cat at the "Birches"—just before it was about to spring on a robin.

That left Anne and her Aunt Emily to discuss their future plans.

"We had better telephone to Mrs. Bellmore," suggested the latter in a very thin, wavering voice. It is astonishing how much suffering a slight, waxen-faced woman can conceal. "She should have been here by this time."

"Perhaps she isn't coming," suggested Anne, feebly.

"Well, if she doesn't, she's a—an old cat," commented Miss Murphy, the bellicose.

So they telephoned to Mrs. Bellmore; that is, Anne telephoned, and Aunt Emily heard only her part of the conversation:

"Is that you, Mrs. Bellmore?"

"Why, this is Miss Forest—Anne Forest, you know."

"At Altwood."

"Yes, we had a meeting in the Town Hall."

"Well, not so very many."

"Yes, she made a speech."

Then there was a long silence, during which time Anne sat with the receiver close to her ear.

"Ask her if she is coming out," whispered Aunt Emily in her ear.

"Oh, Mrs. Bellmore, are you coming to Altwood this morning?"

"Oh, I'm so sorry."

"I see."

"Oh, yes."

"Um!"

"Oh, that's too bad."

"Well, I suppose that would be——"

"What did you say?"

"Oh, of course you know best."

"Very well."

"Good-by."

She wheeled around on her chair, her healthy red cheeks now crimson:

"What did she say?" asked Aunt Emily.

Anne burst forth, suddenly releasing her rising indignation.

"Why, she said that she had an engagement this morning, a very pressing engagement in New York, and that she could not possibly devote any more of her time, at present, to our

march; and, that she was not feeling at all well—from walking so far yesterday—and perhaps she had better give up the idea just now; in fact, that we all had better give it up for the present; and that I could send the satchel back to her house, by parcels post!" She stopped, breathless, and tried to think what it meant to her; how it would appear to daddy; to her mother; to Harold.

She was keenly sensitive to ridicule, and she wanted to hide herself somewhere, anywhere, away from this blatant, noisy, clamorous vulgarity; then, the next moment she was equally anxious to prove her courage, her resolution, her proud contempt for what people might think of her actions—providing, of course, that she had the approval of her conscience.

Then she wondered, perhaps, whether the approval of those who were near and dear to her; of her parents—of—well, yes, say Harold, was not worth something after all. Of course her own conscience must be considered first of all. But, might it not be the case that her con-

science, so small and feeble at times, could, possibly, be influenced by her desires, and her desires created by a vivid imagination, and an idle state of mind. And, after all, a conscience is something that every human being possesses, and animals also, for all I know; some good and strong ones, and others weak and wavering. It is certain that Anne's mother possessed a conscience of more than ordinary discernment; and yet, here was Anne going her own way, and acting in direct opposition to her mother's conscience. It was beginning to dawn upon her that, in the matter of conscience, it might be quite as safe to consider her mother's as well as her own—perhaps safer; for her mother had the experience that she lacked. Then, there was daddy's conscience, a rather good one, also; a little elastic, possibly, in the matter of his books, and the prices paid for them; not quite so sensitive as his wife's, but still a good, serviceable, dependable conscience; and he had opposed the suffragette movement from its very inception.

Peradventure, Anne might have made a mis-

take in blindly, and, it might be said, selfishly, following the dictates of her own conscience; regardless of the pain, the anxiety, and suffering that such action might cause to others. By chance, it might be well, in any crisis that confronts us, to select some one whom we know to have a good conscience, and ask for advice.

At any rate, it was evident to Anne that the Cause, so far as her experience went, was not worth considering; that she no longer cared to act the part of a man or to be mannish; and that a woman's sphere, sheltered in the peaceful quiet of her home, surrounded by her children, and adored by her husband, was altogether the most delightful life that she could think of and long for.

Anne was in this frame of mind when her eyes chanced to rest on a paragraph in the newspaper that was lying on her lap. She read aloud:

"The man had been thrown from his automobile, near Mr. Forest's house; had been taken in, cared for; and he repaid the hospitality of his host by stealing his overcoat and some other articles of value. Unfortunately for him, he dropped his handkerchief

marked 'S. T.', which trifling circumstance led to his arrest, as before stated."

Then she recalled Harold's inquiries of the previous night, regarding Mr. Thornbur, and the whole event was as clear as day.

"Well, of all the funny things that ever happened! To think of that man associating with us all this time. How perfectly dreadful!"

"Dreadful," groaned poor Aunt Emily.

"I declare, I pity the man," said warm-hearted Anne.

"So do I," said her aunt, who was gazing listlessly out of the window.

There was a depressing silence for perhaps ten minutes. A small, busy clock kept ticking the time away on a wooden mantel-piece opposite to where Anne was sitting. She looked at it curiously.

"Twenty minutes of," she commented, with forced gaiety.

"Of what?" sighed Aunt Emily, as she turned from the window.

"Of twelve; and the whole morning is gone.

Mercy!" exclaimed Anne, impatiently, "we have to do something; shall we go on, or stay here, or give it up?"

Aunt Emily had one of her moods of observing silence, which, as before stated, was absolutely unbearable.

"We had better consult Miss Murphy," she finally answered, slowly; "and whatever she decides will be agreeable to me."

Anne jumped to her feet. "All right; anything but this awful idleness. I want to be up and doing something."

Then she went in search of Miss Murphy. But that young woman was nowhere to be found. For a long time Anne roamed here and there, everywhere; but the British General had disappeared as completely as though the earth had opened and swallowed her. Finally the ticket agent at the railroad station remembered that he had sold a ticket to Mylo to a woman who answered Miss Murphy's description.

"To Mylo!" said Anne, in surprise; "what in the world did she want in Mylo?"

"She didn't say," replied the agent.

Aunt Emily was pulling the sleeve of her coat. "Let us go back and wait," she whispered.

When they were again on the street Anne gave vent to her feelings.

"That leaves two—you and me; a nice ending to the 'glo-ri-ous march to Harrisburg.'" She was mimicking Mrs. Bellmore's voice and manner, which indicates how rapidly Anne was recovering her senses. "But what on earth took her to Mylo?" she again questioned.

Aunt Emily said nothing.

When they arrived at their hotel they found Harold Lukens awaiting them. He was flushed and excited, and evidently had a good deal on his mind.

"What is it, Harold?" asked Anne, anxiously; "has anything happened?"

He made a final effort to appear calm and judicial, and then gave it up. "A good deal has happened!" he exclaimed, exultantly.

"Mercy, Harold!" she shuddered; "anything bad?"

"Not so very."

She took heart again and led the way into a little back sitting-room.

"Now," she demanded, "tell us."

"Well, in the first place, your friend Thornbur, you know——"

"Thank you, Mr. Lukens, he is no friend of mine," she interrupted him promptly.

He laughed at her indignation and went on:

"We had him up for examination; and it was such a clear case that he was bound over for trial at the next term of court."

"Poor man," commented Anne; "how pitiable."

"You wait, Anne," he counselled, "before you waste any pity on that man."

Anne waited, and Harold continued:

"They had just fixed his bail at three hundred dollars when in walked your friend, Miss Murphy."

Anne winced.

"Your friend, Miss Murphy, who swore that she was his wife!"

"His wife!" repeated Aunt Emily. She half arose from her chair, and then sank back pale and exhausted. "A little—water," she whispered; "I feel—very—tired."

Anne ran quickly for the water and handed it to her aunt.

"You poor dear auntie," she said, with much commiseration; "this marching business has been entirely too much for you; but we are going home. I'm done with the Cause."

"Good, Anne," said Harold, rejoicing.

"What—what—became of Mr. Thornbur?" questioned Aunt Emily, feebly.

"Oh, Miss Murphy put up cash bail for his appearance at Court, and then they both skipped the town," he answered, gaily. Then he added in his overflowing exuberance: "Flew the coop—vamosed. Oh, we shall never meet again, don't worry!"

"I hope not," said Anne, fervently.

XXVII

BACK TO THE FARM

DADDY was at the station to meet them with old Charlie and the yellow runabout, and so was Miss Keen.

The latter had arrived in Mylo the night before, and had spent most of the intervening time in a state of feverish excitement, relating, to all who would listen, her remarkable experiences in marching with the Woman's Army from the City Hall plaza to Fairmount Park. The incident of Mr. Thornbur's arrest had stimulated her to renewed mental activity; so that, the moment when Aunt Emily had stepped from the train, Miss Keen rushed up to her and shook her hand with almost painful force.

"I told you that I always suspected that man Thornbur; a man with a face like that—and just to think—that Miss Murphy! I don't believe that they were married at all, do you?"

Aunt Emily, bearing her burden in secret, answered calmly:

"I don't believe they were." Then daddy took charge of things and commanded:

"You children can walk; the weather is fine, and I will take Mrs. Towne with me." He helped her carefully into the old yellow runabout, noticing her frail, nerve-worn physique, her thin arm that he felt afraid would crack like a pipe stem if he grasped it too firmly.

He waved a heavy, long whip with a most threatening flourish over Charlie's broad back, and brought it down with a mere fleck—a touch that the horse scarcely felt.

"Tchek—tchek; go on, Charlie. Merciful Jupiter! but you are lazy."

When they had arrived at the top of the hill, overlooking the oats field, they saw a broad line of newly-made furrows; a ploughed field ready for the new crop of corn.

Daddy drew a long breath of satisfaction as he pointed to it with his whip.

"That wild mustard is all ploughed under," he explained—one would have thought that he knew all about farming—"and we are going to plant Canadian corn; comes up quickly, you know."

Aunt Emily's colorless eyes were turned toward the field, but her heart was so near to breaking that she could see nothing. Her mind was torpid, her spirit crushed, beaten—numb with the misery, the hopelessness of her life.

"I think, Cousin John," she said, mechanically, "that I shall go to-morrow."

"Go where?" asked daddy.

"I—I—don't—exactly—know."

Then, fortunately, she began to cry; just a pitiful, gasping little trickling of tears over her white, expressionless face, that made daddy's face turn fiery red; and the veins in his neck swelled up so that his ears commenced to tingle.

"Emily," he said—his voice was very rough, which was daddy's way whenever he was strug-

gling with his emotions—" you must stay here, with us; this must be your home—do you understand—your home? "

For Anne and Harold the longest way around proved to be the shortest way home.

They walked slowly through the woods where the slanting rays of the setting sun cast grossly-exaggerated shadows across their pathway.

Anne was silent and, it might be said, defiant; she was thinking deeply:

What on earth had prompted her to undertake so foolish an enterprise? Why did she allow an impulse to run away with her judgment?

Why—why—why?

" Anne," began Harold, briskly, " now that you are over this crazy business——"

She interrupted him.

" Wait, Harold," she pleaded. "I know what you are going to say; but—but—oh! I am

so tired. I just want to get home and sleep, sleep, sleep."

"Well, will you tell me next week?" he persisted.

She laughed.

"If they wake me by that time, yes, next week."

When they arrived home daddy looked keenly at his little daughter from over the rims of his spectacles, then he took Harold to one side, over against the big chestnut tree, and shook his hand with unnecessary energy.

"You will do well to forget it," he said. "With women one must always forget."

And so ended the seventh and last day of this veracious chronicle.